

very little to fear from so called over pressure in the public schools. By reference to table A it will be seen that out of a registered school population of 487,496 only 14,918 attend school over 200 days in the year, while 344,242 attend less than 150 days in the year. If there is any danger at all from over pressure it can only be in the case of those who attend regularly. Now what is the extent of this danger? A pupil who attends school say 200 days in the year applies his mind for only 1,200 hours, allowing 6 hours per day (or if another hour is allowed for home work, 1,400 hours), in the year, or a trifle over one-seventh of the time. This is the maximum mental strain on any part of our school population; a strain, if I might call it such, which could only affect the most delicate constitutions. I fear there are greater evils in our schools than over pressure. Bad ventilation, defective sewerage, and a disregard of the ordinary laws of health have much more to do with the physical condition of pupils than any pressure imposed by heavy tasks or school programmes."

These points treated of by the Minister have so much practical interest attaching to them that we have examined the voluminous report of over 300 pages with the hope of finding more on the same subjects, but alas! we find in the report proper of over 60 pages extended paragraphs relating to agriculture and temperance teaching in our schools, and 16 pages devoted to religious instruction, but no more regarding the health of nearly 25 per cent. of the whole population of Ontario. We quite agree with the remarks contained in the last lines of the quotation, and must suppose that the Minister, whom we know to have more than ordinary interest and knowledge regarding the sanitary condition of our schools, intends, in a succeeding report to take up his parable where he has left it this year.

The two points of sanitary importance which attach to the quotation refer to (1) the cause of the absence of so large a proportion of pupils, and (2) the opinion expressed regarding *over pressure*.

In the report of the Provincial Board of Health for 1883 is printed an admirable report by G. Dickson, M.A., of Hamilton Collegiate Institute, and now Principal of Upper Canada College, in which is statistically set forth certain facts regarding the health of school children. From it we find that of 5,000 pupils in attendance per month throughout the year, an average of 500 per month is reported absent through sickness; 5 per cent. of these being noted as colds, and headaches. In the only school of the whole city reported to be well heated and ventilated, the number of absentees from sickness during the months of January, February and March was 25 per cent. less than in any other school in the city. With the liberty of the Minister we shall take and apply the facts statistically supplied us by Mr. Dickson in their bearing on the health of over

487,496 school children. According to the average registered attendance in Hamilton, 10 per cent. of all the school children are reported absent through sickness. Take our school population in round number as 500,000, and applying the Hamilton standard we have during the year 50,000 sick school children. As the common ratio of cases of sickness to the number of deaths is 10 to 1, we would, applying this rule, have 5,000 deaths yearly among school children, a figure which, comparing it with the Registrar-General's returns, is not very far astray. But Mr. Dickson informs us that half of the sickness is reported as head-aches and colds. Unfortunately these symptoms are so indefinite as to give us no positive information as to whether they were the prodromous symptoms of some acute disease, or evidences of bad ventilation, or over pressure. We take it that they might fairly be divided as belonging to the three mentioned causes. In a previous part of Mr. Dickson's report we find this statement: "On several occasions during the past few years whole divisions were affected with sickness, and before anything could be done to check the spread of the disease nearly all the class were under the doctor's treatment; and in some instances happy households were quickly transformed into dreary habitations." We trust that the next annual report will tell us how the statutory regulations regarding the registration and reporting of cases of infectious diseases by the school trustees, have been carried out, and that we shall be supplied with such an amount of exact information regarding sickness amongst school children as will give us a basis for discussing infectious diseases in their wide-reaching influence upon the prosperity of the whole community. Regarding the sickness caused by the bad ventilation of schools, there can be no doubt but that the Minister has touched upon the sore spot in all this school business. A school or other building will, generally speaking, have fresh air in it if it is not overcrowded; but if, as in some Hamilton schools, the floor space per pupil average $2\frac{1}{2}$ square feet, it needs no argument to show that not only must the air become absolutely filthy, but that a child harboring infectious disease germs, either in its own system, as in the respiratory passages, or in its clothing, cannot fail to infect all near it, and many others who may be susceptible. Remembering further the mental condition induced by air with carbonic acid and animal exhalations in excess, we marvel how either the teacher can be expected to teach, or the pupil, the victim of foul air, be able to comprehend, with any degree of clearness, what is taught. Under such conditions any mental effort, becomes largely impossible, and any study is over pressure; for to use a common-place illustration, the strain of the load upon the horse depends rather upon the constitution of the horse than upon the size of the load. To old raw-bones the empty cart is a load, but to the Clydesdale three tons may not be too much.