

enced teacher, he will be apt to issue regulations which are practically vexatious at every turn, and in many cases altogether impracticable.

While I would sternly guard the grand outlines, and insist inexorably upon certain simple, definite and attainable results, I would plead for more liberty for individual teachers. Real improvements as to methods of teaching, valuable suggestions as to school organization and management, are far less likely to emanate from the official brain, than from intelligent, enthusiastic and successful teachers. It is upon such points that their advice is specially to be prized. What we want in teachers' conventions is not new and untried theories, or flowing orations about impossible projects of reform outside the school room itself, but the testimony of faithful and intelligent teachers, who, being allowed a wise liberty and discretion, have within those bounds tried certain methods and found them actually succeed."

### THE NEW SCHOOL LEGISLATION.

Teachers of all ranks will have read with interest the discussion in the Ontario Legislature on Thursday last, on the motion of the Minister of Education for the second reading of his Departmental and School bills. The debate, though by no means so searching and exhaustive as it should have been, called attention to several points worthy of note.

It could scarcely be otherwise than true, as pointed out by several speakers, that the County Model Schools have more or less disorganized the schools to which they are appended. The same effect must ensue, to a still greater extent, from the connection of the proposed Training Schools with the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes. One thing at a time is about as much as any man, or any Educational institution, can do well. The proper work of the Public or High School is one thing, that of the Model, or Normal School, is another, and a very distinct one. To require of the same teacher, or staff of teachers, to do both is to put it out of their power to do either in the most efficient manner. The true aim of the Education Department should be to make teaching a distinct and universally recognized profession. The minister professes that aim. How is it to be reached? Surely not by the multiplication of petty normal and model schools, as mere secondary adjuncts of the Public or High Schools all over the country. As a temporary expedient, pending the establishment of a higher standard and the introduction of a better system, they might be allowable. But surely, if teaching is a high and honorable profession demanding the best talent and culture, the teaching of teachers is worthy of being made a distinct work and study. The success of the County Model Schools is pleaded as the strongest argument in favor of the extension of the system. But what is the nature of that success? It is, of course, better that a young man or woman should have a little training and a little practice, before taking charge of a school than none at all. But if the profession is ever to be raised to its proper level it is evident nothing short of a culture and a training, at least equivalent to those required for entry into other professions, must be demanded. Does the adoption of these cheap Normal and Model School expedients hasten the attainment of this great object? Does it not rather retard it, and tend to

perpetuate the impression that no great amount of knowledge or skill is required for the ordinary Public School work?

There is much force in the contention of several of the speakers that the Legislative grant should be divided more equally amongst the schools, or rather should regard rather the amount of the teaching done than the attendance. One of the strongest arguments in favour of such grants is the necessity for aiding the schools in the poor and sparsely settled districts. Good and efficient teachers are just as necessary in such schools as in those of more populous and wealthy sections. Larger inducements, too should be held out for the employment of assistant teachers in the larger schools. It might be going too far to make the grant for each additional teacher fully equal to that given for the first, but certainly the disparity is now too great. Much loss of time and strength is caused by the failure in many places to employ a sufficient number of teachers, and the grants should be so apportioned as to help remedy the evil.

The injustice, to which we referred last week, of imposing increased obligations upon subscribers to the superannuation funds was pointed out by one or more of the speakers. The policy of doing away with the scheme was generally approved, but this should surely be done without prejudice to the rights of those who have already paid the fees for years. No justification, so far as we have observed, has been offered for this doubling of the amount of the annual payments.

It is evidently most desirable that the teachers themselves should have an opportunity to consider and pronounce upon the proposed changes. It is to be hoped that the independent press, at least, will join us in urging that the bill be allowed to stand over until next session.

## Special Articles.

### LITERATURE IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS.

The following passage which we take from a paper read by Superintendent Carman, Union City, before the 34th session of the Michigan State Teachers' Association, and published in the *Moderator*, deals with an educational question of great interest and importance, and indicates that the trend of opinion in Michigan in regard to the place of English literature in the schools, is in the same direction as in Ontario:—

"I take it that the ancient classics have held and still hold the chief place in secondary schools, the world over, because they have ranked as the humanites, and have given direction and unity to all the work done. At a time when there was no English literature the Greek and Latin Classics were styled, and justly too, the humanites, because a taste for the literature of Greece and Rome, and a knowledge of their languages and history were most humanizing in their effects, and it is the main end of education to humanize. So far as colleges and universities are concerned, the ancient classics may still be among the humanites, but no one would venture the claim that, as taught in high schools, they are entitled to rank as such. Have we any humanites for our high schools? If so, all will agree that there is need of their being placed there. In order to give unity to any course of study, there should be some central line of work to which a good share of the