

## THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

The Council of Public Instruction at their meeting on the 3rd February, 1875, enacted :

That in future there be one session of the Normal School annually instead of two ; the time to be as follows :—

The session to commence on 15th September, and to close on the 15th July, with vacations from the third Wednesday in December, to the second Tuesday in January : and from the Wednesday before Easter to the Tuesday after Easter, inclusive. —*Journal of Education.*

We are pleased to see that the Council of Public Instruction intends changing the present sessions of the Normal School from two sessions annually, to one session. It has long been felt that the amount of work attempted to be overtaken in one session, was much greater than could be well digested. The process heretofore was peculiarly of a cramming character—no student being able to digest fully but a very moderate part of the work which he was required to review. It often happened also, that the first six or eight weeks of the session, were passed in organizing and getting ready for work, and that during the remainder of the term, burdens heavy and grievous to bear were laid upon the students, and work was performed or attempted, which should nearly occupy the whole session. By adopting the system now proposed, greater attention can be paid to every department of the work. Nothing need be hastily done, and while the health of the students need not be overtasked in keeping up their course of studies, they will also profit, in the thorough mastering of the whole curriculum.

There are two things in which Normal School training has been largely deficient. First, the whole course was so hasty and carried through under such a heavy pressure, that unless a student was "well up"

before entering, he could derive but little benefit. In other words the Normal school was a mere finishing shop. It was by no means a training school. It could not even be said to afford facilities for forming habits of thought. The whole process was one of memorizing. The teacher, in order to get through the whole course, could give little time to illustration. Even blackboard work had to be practised with great economy of time. And thus, between reading notes and lecturing recalcitrant students, many precious hours were lost, and those mental habits which are so conducive to success in after life were left to be formed, if formed at all, outside the Normal School.

Again, it is one of the primary designs of the Normal School to train teachers in practical teaching. For this purpose students are regularly sent down to the Model School to observe the methods adopted by the teachers there, and by taking charge of classes themselves, to become practically acquainted with duties afterwards to be performed in their own schools. It is well-known to every Normal School student, that the benefit derived from the practical work performed in the Model School is infinitesimally small. Whatever benefits have been derived from attendance upon the Model School arose more from what was *seen* than from what was *done* by the students. The time was too short to do much. It is well-known that during many sessions, when the Normal School was full, that each student was not able to spend more than two or three days altogether in the Model School. On this very limited basis, his teaching capabilities are adjudged, and from these limited facilities for acquiring the art of teaching, he is sent out into the country fully equipped for the duties of his profession. Under the proposed change this very