

they are not few.) which have able and intelligent clerks.

*School Visitors.*—This portion of the bill gives to all clergymen, commissioners of schools and justices, the right of visitation, and of advice in the management of the schools.

*School Inspectors.*—Under this head, an inspector is provided for each district under a board of Commissioners. He is to be selected by the Superintendent, and is to visit each school annually, provided with a form of questions, prepared by the superintendent. These forms, when filled up, he is to present, as his report to the commissioners, by whom they are to be forwarded to the superintendent. He is also, to do all in his power, to diffuse information, especially such as may be furnished to him for that purpose. He is to receive 5s for each school visit.

Without these officers, there cannot be any useful and general school inspection. This was pointed out by the present superintendent in his first report, and he then insisted on the necessity of local inspectors acting under a general head, as in Upper Canada and several parts of the American union. Since that time, Lower Canada and New Brunswick have adopted this method of inspection, convinced of its necessity from the example of the countries which had previously adopted it, and there can be no question that they will soon feel its beneficial influence, both on the teachers and supporters of the schools.

It has been objected that the remuneration proposed is too small. It is based on that given in Upper Canada, and is the same in proportion to the labor required. If thought desirable, however, no friend of education would object to the same remuneration provided in the new law of New Brunswick, which is as follows:—

“Salaries, or remuneration for such inspectors, shall in no case exceed seven shillings and sixpence for each inspection made, except in counties where the remuneration by such compensation would amount to less than fifty pounds, which shall be the minimum allowance per annum for the inspection of schools in any one county.” The last clause would not suit our small counties or districts.

*School Trustees*—Under this head are some of the most important improvements in the new law. The trustees constitute the popular element in our school system, and represent that right of freely selecting instructors for their children, and managing the affairs of their schools, which the people of every free country should regard as one of their most precious rights. The office of the trustee thus becomes one of high importance, and where it is neglected the affairs of the schools are either mismanaged or they fall out of the control of the people into that of the officers appointed by the government, or into the hands of a few

self constituted leaders. Any of these results materially impairs the prosperity of the schools, and diminishes the public interest in them, and it is to this cause that we must attribute a large proportion of their present defects. The remedies proposed in the new law are mainly borrowed from the school law of Canada, and are as follows:—

1. An annual district school meeting at which in the first instance the trustees are to be elected, and in all subsequent meetings, one trustee to supply the place of a retiring member. The trustees must report to this meeting on their management during the past year, and must present an estimate of expenses for the ensuing year, on which the meeting may decide as to its amount and the manner of collection, but cannot reduce below the lowest amount which the trustees may declare to be necessary to the efficient maintenance of the school.

2. The trustees must appoint a secretary, who may be one of themselves or any other person, and whose duty it will be to collect and pay school monies, keep the accounts, &c. This officer will receive a commission on his collections of 5 per cent. This last provision is necessary in order to induce competent persons to act with energy,—as experience has amply shown that in small communities like school districts, the onerous and thankless duty of collecting school monies will rarely be properly performed gratuitously.

3. Full directions are given for the performance of the duties of trustees, in erecting and repairing school houses, hiring teachers, examining the school &c., so that there will be no excuse for the non-performance of these duties on the ground of want of information.

4. A few clauses have been added to accommodate the provisions for the performance of the duties of trustees to the case of towns and villages.

With proper exertion on the part of the superintendent and commissioners, the provisions relating to trustees would in a few years come into universal and active operation, and would introduce into the affairs of the schools a degree of uniformity, promptitude and certainty, altogether unattainable in the present lax and uncertain condition of the legal provisions relating to the election and duties of these important officers.

*Teachers*—Under this head an attempt has been made to specify some of the more important duties of the teacher.—Most of these require no remark; but one of them is too important and delicate to be passed over without a few remarks. This is his duty in reference to the all important matter of religion. On this subject the law requires that he shall “inculcate by precept and example a respect for religion and the principles of christian morality,” “but that he shall not give denominational instruction, except by

desire of the parents. This short clause, which agrees in substance with the provisions of the law of Canada and New Brunswick on the same subject, when taken in connection with the other provisions of the law, leaves the whole subject of religious instruction within the control of the parents in each school district. The commissioners are required to satisfy themselves of the good moral character of the teachers before licensing them. The trustees, acting for the people, are bound to select a teacher who shall be unexceptionable to the whole or the majority in his moral and religious character. The teacher on his part is bound to inculcate those great principles of christian truth and morals on which all christians are agreed. This gives him, if a good man, a wide and useful scope. In addition to this, however, he can give all instruction of a more particular character which the parents may require, and which his own religious views may make it possible for him to give. It must be remarked, however, that it is a very mistaken view to suppose that the whole or even a very large portion of the work of religious instruction devolves on the common school teacher. His place as a religious instructor must always be subordinate to that of the parent at home, and that of the church, through its ministers. In this respect, the teacher of a day school is in a very different position from that even of the head of a boarding school, who has the children always under his care. Taking this limited view of the teachers' duties in this department, which however in no respect derogates from the responsibility of his position, we think that every christian should be disposed to admit that the provisions above referred to give all the guarantees for religious instruction possible in the circumstances. The only other alternatives are the adoption by the legislature of some form of instruction as the religion of the state, or the division of the school money among the several sects. The first, even those who believe it desirable, know to be impossible. The second would dissipate and waste the small means available for public instruction, would deprive many poor districts of schools, and would excite an incalculable amount of politico-sectarian animosity. We subjoin for comparison the provision of the new law of New Brunswick on the subject:—

“Also to exert his best endeavors both by example and precept, to impress upon the minds of his scholars the principles of the christian religion, morality and equity, provided that no child shall be required to read or study in or from any religious book, or to join in any exercise of devotion or religion which shall be objected to by his or her parents or guardians.”

Here we close for the present our comments on the new school law. It proposes nothing utopian or untried, but