

The interest manifested by the public in the semi-annual closing service of this Provincial Institution seems unabated. Never on any former occasion was the number of Visitors, greater. Every crevice and corner of the Building and of its entrance, from whence any one could see or hear what was going on, was occupied. The whole proceedings were much enlivened by the excellent pieces of music sung by the Pupil-Teachers at the end of every hour, conducted by Mr Williams the able Music Master of the Institution.

## REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION FOR 1858.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

In conformity with statutory enactment, I beg to submit to your Excellency my report of the Common, Grammar, Normal, and Model Schools for the past year.

I shall first of all advert to a few of the more prominent features in the Statistical tables appended, and then present a brief account of my proceedings as Superintendent of Education.

But before I proceed to an examination of these tables, I may take the liberty of expressing my regret that so many imperfections and deficiencies still adhere to them, and that they cannot be regarded in any other light than a mere approximation to the truth. I have in the pages of the Educational Journal frequently and earnestly pressed upon the attention of Teachers, Trustees and Commissioners, the benefit that would flow from their exercising greater diligence and accuracy in gathering up, within their respective provinces and bounds, all educational statistics, yet I do not think they are one whit more complete, than they were last year. I do not mean by this remark to charge any of these parties with dereliction of duty. On the contrary, I believe they have done their duty to the best of their ability; and several of them have bestowed no small amount of pains in collecting much valuable information. The meagreness and deficiencies of these tables, are to be ascribed, not so much to the parties mentioned, as to the legislative educational enactment now in force, there being no staff of paid agents, whose business it is to attend to such matters; and until such a staff of public officers is appointed, I despair of being able to present any thing like an accurate and reliable view of the condition of education in the Province.

In reference to these tables, it may be stated, generally, that they show some improvement on those of last year. The number of schools, and of course, of teachers, is considerably increased. The difference between the number of schools taught in summer and winter, is diminished. Though the public money expended is somewhat smaller than last year, the amount raised by the people is larger, by a few hundreds. The apparatus and equipments, as well as the whole character of the education imparted, both in the Common and Grammar Schools, seem, as far as can be ascertained from these tables, decidedly on the advance. But to be somewhat more particular:—

1. And, first, allow me to call your Excellency's attention to the effect of the additional grant made to the cause of com-

mon education two years ago. It is well known that the Legislature of 1857 voted a third more towards this object. This movement I cordially supported, in the hope, mainly, that such an addition would form a great boon to those teachers laboring in the more sparsely settled districts. Though disappointed in this expectation, in consequence of the increased number of teachers, it was gratifying to observe from last report, that 5000 more children were receiving education. That this enlarged attendance is chiefly to be attributed to this additional allowance, is, we think, abundantly apparent, in the fact, that whilst, during the winter of 1857 and 1858, there was an increase of 2428 scholars above the preceding, the last summer, when the grant was withdrawn, there was a falling off of 3657. In these circumstances, I think no one can hesitate to admit that this additional grant imparted a powerful impulse to the cause of education, at least, in so far, as the quantity is concerned; or to regret, that it should have been found necessary to withdraw it at the end of one brief year.

2. Again, the reduced difference between the number of schools taught in winter and summer seems to demand a remark or two. In the last statistical tables, the Returns of the number of Schools showed a difference of 200 more in summer than in winter. In the tables appended, this difference is reduced to 142. One of the greatest impediments in the way of progressive advancement in the cause of education, in this province is the temporary duration of the great majority of our schools. The irregularity of the scholar is a serious obstacle in the way of progress, but the closing of the school altogether, for months consecutively, if not for a year or more, is still worse. Various reasons may be assigned for this state of things. The nomadic habits of the teachers themselves, the practice, in some districts, of employing female teachers in summer and male in winter, the untenability of too many school-houses in winter, the ignorance or the erroneous view entertained by too many parents;—these, and such like reasons, conspire in shutting up a great number of school-houses. But be the cause what it may, it is injurious in the extreme, to the general interests of education. In such circumstances, no real progress can possibly be made. At the very time when the scholars are becoming acquainted with the teacher, and the teacher with the scholars, does a separation take place. When, after the lapse of a year, or half a year, the school is again opened with a new teacher, the scholars are about half the time of his sojourn in their midst before they arrive at the point where they left off with the former teacher; and thus it is there are hundreds of our youthful population, who are enrolled in our tabular statements, year after year, as receiving instruction, to whom that instruction is of little or no practical benefit in after life; and if it is so disastrous to the rising generation, where, we would ask, is the economy or saving to the parents. It is the most expensive education that children can possibly receive. It is encouraging then to observe, that in this matter, there appear to be some symptoms of amendment. In the absence of a compulsory enactment, requiring a certain amount of attainment, or a certain period of regular attendance at school—which, in my opinion, ought to constitute part of the provision of every national system—I know of no other more effectual remedy for this state of things, than to endeavour to elevate the public tone in reference to the value and benefit of a thorough education.

3. Again, in looking over these tables and comparing them