

school commissioners, and he could not tell A from B." But now that this headstrong opponent is obliged to pay his assessment and monthly fees, he sends his children to school, notwithstanding his recollection of his father's want of education, not perhaps for the sake of gaining instruction, but merely that he may not spend money in vain; and further that he may not pay for others. Whatever may be his motive, his children nevertheless are taught, and as I have already remarked, the present generation once educated, every thing will go well, and we may even anticipate much zeal, because this zeal will become a determined desire to acquire knowledge and a just appreciation of its necessity. I have, Sir, herein before stated, that it would be difficult to curtail the powers now vested in the commissioners, and which I, with many other Inspectors, my colleagues, consider as too extensive. If, as several of them have remarked, the law exacted the proof of a certain competency at least, a knowledge of reading and writing as a condition of qualification for election to the several rural public offices, such as Mayor, Councillor, even Captain of Militia, and why not for Church-warden? It would be an indirect and almost imperceptible, but sure means of correcting the anomaly which exists in our law, that of intrusting the direction of a system of education to those who have none themselves, it would in fact be a species of normal school for school commissioners: and the necessity of such a measure is most apparent. The inclination felt in the country to hold these honorary offices would prove another incentive to the advancement of education. Good municipal administration, of which we stand so much in need, would benefit materially, and our system of agriculture would soon cease to be, what I much fear it will remain for some time yet, without popular education and notwithstanding its progress, a routine.

With many of the Governments of Europe ignorance is considered as an offence: why should we not follow their example; are we not in a position to declare that every one who remains ignorant, is so, through his own fault, and is therefore voluntarily culpable?

It is much to be regretted that when the fund for the erection of school houses was distributed, there was no uniform plan recommended to serve as a guide for the commissioners, ... their construction and distribution, much good would have resulted, particularly as regards the salubrity and comfort of the schools, wanting (with few exceptions) in all our school houses. My district of inspection will soon be provided with a sufficient number of schools to meet the wants of the population. Besides, it must not be imagined that the number of schools is at all a sure indication of progress; it is very frequently but an additional proof of the statement, I made above of the interest resulting from the direct payment of assessment, &c. "I must pay for a school.—Well, I wish to have one near my own door, and next year I will vote for a Commissioner who will promise me one."—It is for this reason that many parishes have too many schools for the amount of salaries they can afford to pay to competent teachers, and this number of schools, with badly paid teachers, is the cause of their never being above mediocrity. We have a sufficient number of schools, what we require now is, to render them more effective, and for this purpose, there is wanting:

Firstly. Uniformity in the school books.

Secondly. A uniform method of practical teaching, economising time.

Thirdly. Good, moral, competent and assiduous teachers, whose diplomas will state the particular class for which it was granted so as to assist the Commissioners in their selection of school teachers which they frequently are unable to do alone.

Fourthly. Regulations for the internal government of the schools.

Fifthly. The establishment of a program of studies, so that inconvenience arising from the great variety of which so much parade is made, in many of our schools, and in consequence of which no material progress is made in any one branch, may be obviated. On this last point, every thing yet remains in doubt, every branch, even the study of the language, is attempted to be rendered more complicated. I am convinced, that in our purely French country schools, the study of the English language, is a complete loss of time. This study should be confined to our Institutions for Superior Education in the same manner as the study of the French is in Upper Canada confined to the Grammar Schools. The climate of Lower Canada renders our position very different from that of other countries. Our agricultural labor is continual, and one kind of work follows another without interruption during the four seasons of the year, and at each of these seasons the scholar is required to take part in them; he has less time than in most other countries to devote to study, his time must be economised therefore, that is, that he give himself up solely to the acquirement of what is necessary. Whatever may be the motives which induce some parents in the

country parts to insist on their children, learning English in the elementary schools, I much fear, that we shall pay very dearly for this study. The reason is that frequently, hands are required to assist in the farm labor, and the children who are at school are obliged to be taken to replace their elder brothers who have left for the United States.

"The situation of Secretary-Treasurer in the country, is one of more importance than is generally believed; he is the factotum and the confidential and legal adviser of the School Commissioners. In many instances the good or bad working of the Educational Law depends entirely upon him. Unfortunately the appointment to this office is not made with all the circumspection that is necessary, especially since it has become more lucrative under the provisions of the last law, for it has in some instances been the cause of intrigue and favoritism not altogether consistent with the interest of the municipalities. To my knowledge, Secretary-Treasurers whose conduct had been irreproachable, have been dismissed without the slightest cause, for the purpose of giving the situation, and particularly the increased salary, to uneducated persons, to whom the law could never have contemplated that they would be given. Unfortunately with respect to this as to many other points, the Superintendent is not vested with sufficient power; he cannot re-instate the dismissed Secretary-Treasurer, and the only punishment to which he can condemn the Commissioners, is the forfeiture of their share in the grant, a punishment affecting the innocent as well as the guilty.

I find the Secretary-Treasurers' books of receipts and disbursements generally speaking, very badly kept. I have much difficulty in persuading them to procure bound books, instead of those without either cover or binding, the flying sheets of which have already been the cause of two suits of considerable moment within my district of inspection.

I must here refer to a mode of payment much used in some of the municipalities within my district. This is, *bons* or drafts for goods on merchants, which the teacher is obliged to pay. I could cite two or three cases which would incontestably prove that the teacher generally loses by this system of payment, a quarter or an eighth of his salary, of which the merchant derives the sole benefit; I abstain however from doing so, lest the parties should be recognized. As the Commissioners should always, previous to engaging teachers, count upon paying their salaries, not out of the probable but out of the fixed revenues of the municipality, if they do not collect them, the fault is theirs, and the teacher should in no wise be the sufferer. I would wish that when Commissioners have undertaken to pay on a certain day, that each payment should be punctually made, and that in default of so doing they should pay double interest. I would prefer this means even to their being paid by the Superintendent, for I think it would induce the Commissioners to collect their arrears more promptly.

The sketch which I have made above of the actual state of school affairs within my district is certainly not very consoling. But, Sir, I have only given the dark side of the question, I have said nothing of all the good that has been effected within its boundaries. This good has been achieved by the school Commissioners, the Secretary-Treasurers and other persons sufficiently disinterested in the ranks of patriotism and charity to stand in no need of my praise to encourage them in their good work. The little time I have at my disposal will not allow me to proceed farther with my remarks on this subject of abuses requiring a speedy reform. I cannot avoid seeing, that much is yet to be done, but, thanks to an all-wise Providence a new impulse appears to be given to the minds of the people, a desire for education and for progress in general, that should induce us to predict favorably for the cause of education.

My statistical tables (which I collected and made up with the utmost care) fully proves the increase of zeal, on the part of the people for education. Following my remarks on the state of the schools in the several municipalities, I have given a comparative statement of the last half-year, and there are few branches of study which do not show considerable increase. If all the officers of our intellectual army do not possess all the capacity or the talents they could or should have, we must wait a little longer, the ranks are filled with young and intelligent recruits, and under the Chief now at our head, we cannot fail to conquer, if the Legislature will only, instead of diminishing, increase its generous efforts in our favor.

Following his general remarks on the present state of Education within his district of inspection, Mr. Dorval gives a brief sketch of each municipality separately. We request that our readers and more especially the school Commissioners within this district will read attentively Mr. Dorval's