

according to the rate of average attendance and the length of time the schools have been open. The further expenses of the school are defrayed by the section, and in what manner these shall be raised is determined by the voters at their annual meeting. They may adopt voluntary subscription and 'rate bills,' or school fees; but if the sums raised by these means are insufficient for the support of the school, the trustees have the power *son motu* to assess an additional rate in order to meet the deficiency, and this they may collect, either on their own authority or through the township council. Other resources are sometimes available, and in particular the clergy reserve fund; but this enumeration represents the general plan on which the schools are supported. An account of the total receipts of common schools in Upper Canada in 1863 will exhibit the proportions in which these different resources are drawn upon. The legislative grant was \$159,927; the municipal or county assessment to meet the grant was \$287,768; the trustees' assessment amounted to \$631,755; the sum of \$72,680 was raised by rate bills, the 'clergy reserve fund' and other sources, contributed \$108,467; the balance from the preceding year were \$167,285, and the total receipts \$1,432,885. It may, perhaps, be interesting to add the manner in which this sum was expended. Teachers salaries absorbed \$987,555; maps and other apparatus, \$20,775; sites and building school houses, \$106,637; rents and repairs, \$34,867; books, stationery, fuel, &c., \$104,610. The number of schools wholly free was 3,228; those partly free—i.e., where a moderate school fee is charged, but not enough to dispense with the trustees' assessment, 834; the number supported by rate bill, 71. The cost per child is said to be much the same as in the United States.

"Such are the general outlines of the Upper Canada system. But one important feature remains to be mentioned, in which it differs entirely from the system of the United States. It is purely permissive, not compulsory. Its adoption by any municipality is entirely voluntary, and even the number, kind, and description of schools which shall be established or maintained in any city or town are left to the discretion of each municipality. It is certainly remarkable, as Mr. Fraser observes, that

"Under these free conditions it has succeeded in the course of 20 years in covering the province with a network of schools, and that in the year 1863 it had on its school rolls, for a greater or less period of time, the names of 339,817 children between 5 and 16 years of age, out of a school population within those ages of 412,367."

"And such success affords strong proof that,

"Whether perfect or not in all its parts, the system is at least adapted to the wants of the people, and commends itself both to their sentiments and their good sense."

"This voluntary element in the system furnishes the superintendent with one great advantage in meeting the complaints which are occasionally raised where the system proves to be burdensome. He says:—

"Parties who wish to abolish the present school system in any municipality have no need to assail the chief superintendent or to petition Parliament; let them go to the ratepayers themselves and their respective trustees and councilors, the only parties that can levy the rates, and the very parties that can terminate them and adopt the voluntary system."

"The practical working of the system seems, however, to exhibit precisely the same difficulties and imperfections as that of the United States. The proportion of attendance to enrolment is grievously low. The total number of pupils enrolled is 360,808, of whom 192,990 were boys, 167,818 were girls; but the average attendance was only 148,036, or 38 per cent. of the enrolment. The number who attended 176 days—the minimum number of attendances required by our Privy Council—was only 17 per cent., the corresponding number of England being more than 40 per cent. Perhaps this deficiency is not surprising in a country where there must be so many demands upon children's labor, and where the weather is often so inclement. Here, too, as in the United States, the ratepaying system gives rise to frequent disputes, and the penurious disposition of county trustees often renders the schools utterly inefficient. 'My greatest trouble,' reports one local superintendent, 'is settling quarrels and disputes between trustees and ratepayers; and I assure you this is no easy matter when you have ignorant trustees and still more ignorant people to deal with.' The same gentleman begins his report with the following remarkable sentence:—"In every case I advised the ratepayers in the several school sections not to elect as trustees any man that could not read or write, and I am happy to say that my request has been complied with in most cases at the last election." It appears that school trustees scarcely less illiterate are to be found in Philadelphia and New York; but in great cities they are overborne by the general spirit around them; in rural districts their influence is most pernicious. The following extract from a superintendent's report exhibits this evil very vividly:—

"Experience convinces me that the great body of our common school trustees are remiss in the performance of their duties through entire ignorance of their real nature. Many trustees have never seen the act; many more are scarcely capable of reading, and utterly incapable of interpreting the same. I have witnessed other instances of neglect of duty by trustees for which ignorance could not be pleaded. Reference has already been made to the slovenly and inaccurate manner in which, as a general rule, trustees' annual reports are filled. In addition, I may mention the prevailing practice of engaging an incompetent teacher at a low salary, leaving the school house in a state of dilapidation, or destitute of proper furniture and apparatus, through fear of incurring the displeasure of the section on account of expenditure. I could cite examples to corroborate these statements, which receive additional force from the fact that they occur in this wealthy and well-settled township. I could point to several of the log school houses which are destructive to the health and growth alike of body and mind, I could instance others in which the maps are so defaced and time-worn as to be really useless, and one school in particular where there are but two old maps, and where the local superintendent has on four different occasions (and ineffectually) written to request the trustees to provide a new set. My report will show that there are in this township 29 school-houses. Of these ten are brick, five are old frames, and the remaining 14 are the original log-buildings effected by the first settlers."

"These deficiencies, however, are probably to a large extent, inevitable under any system, and, whatever its faults, the system of Upper Canada merits, on the whole, no little approval, and even admiration. Mr. Fraser says:—

"It is very remarkable that in a country occupied in the greater part of its area by a sparse and anything but wealthy population, whose predominant characteristic is as far as possible removed from a spirit of enterprise, an educational system so complete in its theory and so capable of adaptation in practice should have been originally organized, and have been maintained in what, with all allowances, must still be called successful operation for so long a period as 25 years."

"The system appears, indeed, to be weak in precisely the same part as our own, but, as we shall presently see, there is at least one point in which we may possibly take a lesson from it."

2. TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO.

The seventh annual Convention of the Teachers' Association of the Province of Ontario took place on the 6th, 7th, and 8th inst. The first question discussed was—"How to improve our Constitution so as to increase the interest of teachers in the association."

Several speakers addressed the meeting on that subject.

ADDRESS OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT.

The first Vice-President, Mr. William McCabe, LL.B., of Oshawa, then proceeded to draw the attention of the Association to the subjects to be discussed, as laid down in the circular. They were:—

1. What are the best modes of teaching reading and spelling?
 2. Should one series of text books only be used in our schools?
 3. What are the advantages of the monitorial, simultaneous, and individual modes of teaching, and under what circumstances should each be employed?
 4. How more effectually to secure the moral well-being of the children attending our schools?
 5. Should girls be recognized as pupils of our Grammar Schools?
- Of these topics two were of special importance. One of these had already excited considerable attention, viz., the subject of female education, especially in connection with Grammar Schools. The others, which had reference to primary instruction, were of equal importance. He trusted these topics would receive that consideration to which they were entitled. In regard to the former topic he was convinced that the education of women ought to be conducted on the principle that they are the equals, not the inferiors of men. A proposed change, as intimated in the note of the Deputy Superintendent to the Hamilton Board of Trustees, denies her the right to equal education with the sterner sex, and virtually excludes her from the higher schools.* It might be replied

* Mr. McCabe, and a few other teachers, we regret to see, entirely misapprehend the views of the Educational Department on this subject. Abundant facilities are provided in the School Law for the higher education of girls. If the Boards of Trustees availed themselves of these facilities, even to the providing of a higher department for girls in the schools, all the girls of a city, town, or village, might avail themselves of such advantages. Unless the advocates of the admission of girls to Grammar Schools are prepared to throw them open entirely to that class of pupils, equally with boys, they unnecessarily divert Grammar Schools from their legitimate purposes, and do not provide for an essential defect in our city, town, and village system of public schools.