

EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

A Capital Description of the Colonial School System.

The Way They do Things over in the Antipodes—Some "Pointers" for our Own Ontario.

From our own Correspondent.

DEAR SIGNAL,—In this letter I purpose giving your readers a summary of the workings of the Public School System in this colony, knowing that Huron teachers, parents, and all interested in the educational advancement of the Canadian youth, will be pleased to hear of the progress the Southern Hemisphere is making towards that end.

MY EXPERIENCE IN ONTARIO

causes me to take a feeling interest in this subject, and assists in making observations, and comparing and contrasting with our own the various methods employed here, and I trust that this letter—the results of my observations for two years—may go to show that our Ontario educational system still holds its proud place,—well to the fore, but might even yet profit by adopting some of New South Wales regulations.

It must be remembered that the area of this colony is nearly three times greater than that of Ontario, while the population is about one million compared with over two millions in Ontario; this calls for many acts differing from those regulating the workings of our Ontario school system; but notwithstanding disadvantages arising from sparsely settled districts, almost intolerable heat during eight months of the year in the interior, heavy rains along the coast, and other causes all tending to prevent regular attendance on the part of the pupils, the standard of the New South Wales schools is good.

There are about two thousand schools in this colony, including eight grammar schools and forty HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SCHOOLS, under itinerant teachers. These schools are divided into about one hundred districts, each district presided over by a School Board whose duty it is to see to the efficient local supervision of the various schools in their charge. The school houses for the most part are substantial brick buildings, judiciously distributed in the centres of the most populous districts, but as the government has heretofore adopted no proper survey system, there is no regularity in the school sections or divisions as we have in Ontario. The nature of the accommodation provided for the pupils is good, each child being allowed one hundred cubic feet of space, and plenty of plain brick buildings, or painted, no plaster being used to line the rooms, nor is the building ceiled overhead, but left open, thus giving plenty of ventilation. The rafters and roofing are painted, somewhat relieving the bareness.

THE SUPPLY OF APPARATUS

and furnishings is replenished once a year, or oftener, if necessary, by the teacher making application for them. The government gives out the apparatus for a period of five years at a time for the supplying of school requisites, and it is the boast of the Education Department that their schools will compare favorably in point of material equipment with any public schools in any other country. Many of our Ontario school teachers would be profited if this regulation were universally adopted. There is no doubt a few of even the Huron teachers can troop up recollections of absent window shades, a dearth of maps, boards, pens, dippers, chalk, wood or other necessities for the convenient carrying on of their work, and which the local ones in authority persistently failed to see the necessity of replenishing. The school grounds are roomy, but I have not observed any pretensions to planting and laying out flower gardens. Each school bears an inscription in stone or on a painted board the words "Public School." The erection of all buildings is directly under the supervision of the Department architect, which generally ensures a handsome as well as a substantial building. The majority are—

"MIXED SCHOOLS"

for boys and girls, but in Sydney and the large towns there are some sixty separate schools. The average cost per year to the state for each child's education, calculated on the total enrolment for the year is nearly five pounds or about twenty-one dollars, including all other expenditure included. The schools are classified into ten classes, the average attendance and proficiency of the school being the basis of classification. Class No. 1 requires an average attendance of at least 600. No. 2 requires 400. No. 3, 300. No. 4, 200. Now as regards the teachers and their standing as compared with those of Ontario. There are only

TWO TRAINING SCHOOLS

for teachers in the colony, one for males, and the other for females. Those supply the principal schools, the small "bush schools" are supplied by local applicants who have been educated in a public school to a prescribed limit corresponding to our entrance examination applicants. If these show aptitude after two years' teaching, they are eligible for admission to the training school. In this institution the student attends both day and night, studying for the first year or six months, applying the lectures received in a practical school similar to our model. They undergo bi-monthly examinations, and at the end of each term the pass examination is held and the students in training and applicants for higher grade certificates are classified on their merits in one of seven classes: 1st Class A, 1st Class B, 2nd Class A, 2nd Class B, 3rd Class A, 3rd Class B, 3rd Class C. The higher grades do not require so stiff an examination as in Ontario, a colonial first class B is about equal to our second class A, and from that down to a high school entrance examination. It may be seen by this graduation that teachers are expected to be continually working up a higher grade, and as they are successful in their examinations, promotion to a higher class school follows, and with the higher schools comes additional emolument, as explained previously by schools, a classed according to average attendance.

and the proficiency of the pupils, into ten classes. First class teachers are eligible to schools in either of the first two classes, 2nd class teachers to schools ranging as low as the sixth, and 3rd class teachers to the eighth and tenth classes.

THE TEACHERS' SALARIES

are uniformly fixed by the government, according to the class school and grade of their certificate. 1st class A, salary, 400 pounds and residence, 100 pounds, equal to about \$2,500; 2nd class A, 350 pounds, or \$1,650, if he has charge of the highest class school prescribed for his grade of certificate, if the lowest his income is about 300 pounds, or \$1,500; 3rd class vary according to grade of school from \$1,150 to \$900. It will thus be seen that some of the lowest paid 3rd class teachers here get better salaries than the majority of our 2nd A teachers at home. The writer brings before his mind with startling vividness

A CASE IN POINT

bearing on the question of the amount of the teacher's salary as settled by the other. The teacher was a young man who had the supervision of from 150 to 200 "young ideas," assisted by the two lesser lights, one appointed for three months during the "busy season," and who, when her turn expired, could not be engaged on account of the "expensive must be kept down," and, consequently, over 150 of the aforementioned young ideas were expected to be thoroughly and efficiently taught "to shoot" by the principal and his assistants. The question of salary for the ensuing year came before the three Solons; five hundred dollars were asked, but notwithstanding the fact that they "could not want a better teacher," they "did not know that ever a better teacher had been in the school," still they refused to grant the amount asked, "the expense must be kept down," and "provision must be made for a second assistant next year again, as the school was very much increasing." The result of mature and due deliberation on the part of the three solons was that the teacher got \$400 per year. Three months afterwards he directed his energies in a more profitable channel. In one respect it may be that the classification system for teachers' salaries is superior to the haphazard way they are determined in many parts of Ontario. Teachers here, however, irrespective of their own choice or inclination, have

THEIR LOCATION FIXED

by government, and may be sent to the farthest outlying "bush school," or may be set down in the midst of the city of Sydney, but on the whole the classification of schools is very satisfactory. The principal difficulty lies in properly siting and adjusting the various grades of teachers to the various classes of schools. To increase his income and standing, the teacher works hard to get a higher grade certificate, often to find his appointment made to an inferior class school, owing to all higher class schools being filled. Every school in the first five or six classes has its teacher's residence attached, and

A PREMIUM IS PLACED ON MARRIED TEACHERS.

A teacher who came from Wellington in Oct., by a late mail applied to the Minister of Education for school. The first question asked was if he had a partner in his joys and sorrows, and the reply being in the negative he was told it was a pity for an excellent school just starting, but the teacher must be married. Our friend promised to mend his weakness, and no doubt before the year is out he will be comfortably ensconced in a teacher's residence at three or four hundred pounds per year.

A TRUANT OFFICER.

To prevent the boys from "wagging it," as Young Australia terms truant or "hooky," a school attendance officer is employed in every district whose duty it is to look after the attendance, and see that the boy who is observed surging round the corner, loafing behind a fence or hunting wallabies or native birds, when this functionary is near. There are in all about fifty of these officers, wherever part of their duty is to inquire into and prosecute cases where parents are at default in sending their children, between seven and twelve, the necessary seventy days in the year. It is seen that compulsory education is a fact at the school regulations here. About three thousand prosecutions were authorized by the Minister of Education last year for default in attendance, the aggregate of the fines amounting to about \$8,000.

THE COMPULSORY SYSTEM

is, therefore, not a dead letter in Australia, and although in many cases the parents plead the excuse that their children are educated at home or in a private school, and escape by many loopholes the obligatory clause, still there are many who do not thwart the ends of justice by such excuses. The classification in the pupils in schools visited by me I found very good. Children when removing to another school are obliged to show a certificate of their standing to the teacher, thus precluding the possibility of "self promotion," as I have known some Huron boys do, which, by the bye, brings to my recollection a "little thing of my own" in that line, which I tried on when a boy and removing from one school to another, I had been reading in the 3rd Reader for over a year and did not see no justifiable reason for a further delay of promotion, so I prepared myself with a new outfit including a 4th Reader, but I was forced to beat an ignominious retreat to a lower room when the eyes of the master who, by the way, was West Huron's present Inspector, J. R. Miller, found it did not do a simple question in Reduction.

EDUCATIONAL STANDING

The great majority of schools in the colony are classed between six and ten; the majority of teachers therefore hold 3rd class certificates. There are in all about three thousand teachers in this colony, W. Elliott, a Johnston, Large English school, and G. Woods, F. Wild, Carolan, and J. W. Swaffield. Other names, J. W. Swaffield, T. Williams, W. Townsend, and

medicine and science. Mechanics Schools of Arts are numerously scattered over the colony and are well assisted by the State. There are also in Sydney a Technical College, Royal Society, Linnæan Society and many other kindred organizations showing that New South Wales considering her age is making her educational institutions a prominent feature in the many attractions held out to the emigrants from the densely populated European countries.

D. E. McC.

Bayfield show.

The Stanley Agricultural Society held its annual show at Bayfield, on Thursday and Friday, of last week. The second day of the show was fine, and helped to bring out a crowd of spectators to reflect creditably on the judgment of the judges. We can say this, there was a great deal of uncomprehending dissatisfaction at their judgment in several instances; among the crowd this was noticeably so in reference to both the carriage class and buggy horses. Several good teams and bays were shown, a two-year old gelding being much admired. There was a heavy exhibit of grade cattle; good of sheep; pigs and poultry only moderate. The indoor department was splendid, some really excellent agricultural work and paintings being shown. Roots, fruit, vegetables and dairy produce were well represented. The Secretary requests us to state that he will be at Pollock's hotel, Bayfield, at 4 o'clock, p. m., on the 17th inst., when prize money will be paid.

PRIZE LIST.

Agricultural Horses.—Brood mare with foal, W. Bowden, Geo. Green, Foal, 1 and 2 W. Bowden. 1-yr old colt, F. Wilds. 2-yr old filly, 1 and 2 W. Wise. 2-yr old gelding, Peter Cole, Jas Campbell. 1-yr old filly, W. Wise, Jos. Wild. 1-yr old gelding, S. Salkeld. Span working horses, Jas Campbell; A. M. Campbell. General Purpose Horses.—Brood mare with foal, R. McAllister, G. Green. Foal, R. McAllister, W. Rattell. Yearling, R. McAllister. Two-year-old filly, R. Beacom. 2-yr old gelding, 1 and 2 Thos. Elliott. 2-yr old filly, S. McDougal. 1 year old gelding, J. Campbell. Year old filly, W. Elliott. W. String. Span working horses, Jas Armstrong. Agricultural Horses.—Brood mare with foal, Peter Cole, Gabriel Elliott. Foal, Mrs John Peck, Robt Brook. One-year-old colt, W. Elliott, Jas Johnston. Two-year-old gelding, J. Beacom. John Gardner. Two-year-old filly, R. Beacom. W. H. Woods. One-year-old filly, A. M. Campbell, R. Brook. Span of Carriage horses, A. Sparks, D. McBrien. Buggy horse, S. Forsyth, T. Pollock. Saddle horse, G. Erwin, P. P. Cole. Special prize, by George Green, for year old colt, bred by Don Vega, Jas Gallagher. Special prize by John Beacom, for best colts sired by Tontine, Henry Beacom, Mrs J. Peck. Special by Sturgeon & Smiley, for colts sired by Public Enterprise, R. Little. Milch cow, John Mc Nab, Jas Wallis. 2-yr old heifer, 1 and 2 John Tough. 1-yr old heifer, W. Elliott, John Tough. Fat cow or heifer, 1 and 2 W. H. Woods. Heifer calf, J. McNabb, J. Nicholson. Yoke 2-yr old steers, W. H. Woods. A Yoke 1-yr old steers, A. Keys, W. H. Woods. Fat ox or steer, 1 and 2 W. H. Woods. Bull calf, J. Nicholson. Yoke 3-yr old steers, 1 and 2 W. H. Woods. Cattle Show.—Pair ewes, 1 and 2 J. Salkeld. Sheep.—Aged ram, J. G. Stewart, W. E. Whately. Shearling ram, J. O. Stewart, H. Beacom. Ram lamb, W. Whately, Isaac Salkeld. Ewes, 1 and 2 H. Beacom. Shearling ewes, J. O. Stewart, W. Whately. Ewe lambs, J. O. Stewart, W. Whately. Fat sheep, John Salkeld, W. E. Whately. Down Sheep of any Kind.—Ram, J. O. Stewart, J. Salkeld. Shearling ram, W. Cooper, J. O. Stewart. Pair ewes, 1 and 2 W. Cooper. Shearling ewes, W. Cooper, J. O. Stewart. Berkshire Pigs.—Sow, Geo. McDonald. Sow six months or under, H. Beacom. Suffolk.—Aged boar, 1 and 2 Geo. Plewes. Sow, 1 and 2 Geo. Plewes. Sow, six months or under, 1 and 2 Geo. Plewes. Dairy Produce.—Tennet salt butter, Mrs G. Weston, Mrs Geo. Weston, Mrs Jas Wallace. Five pounds table butter, Robt. McIlveen, Jas Wallace. Cheese, 1 and 2 John Tough. Home made cheese, A. Johnston. Home made wine, Joseph Wild, Fritz Wild. Honey, 1 and 2 Robt. McIlveen. Honey in comb, A. Johnston. Baked, John Woods, P. Cole. Two year old bread, Mrs A. Grainger, Mrs James Armstrong. Grain and Seed.—White winter wheat, A. Johnston, J. Salkeld. Red winter wheat, A. Grainger, W. Swaffield. Demon wheat, J. Salkeld, W. Stoddell. Lost Native wheat, R. McAllister, J. Wild. Small peas, R. McAllister, J. Wild. Two rowed barley, J. Salkeld. White oats, common, I. Salkeld, G. Green. Black oats, W. Stoddell, A. Johnston. Timothy seed, J. Salkeld, A. Johnston. Flax seed, J. Salkeld, I. Salkeld. Corn, A. Grainger, J. Wild. Fruit.—Collection grapes, J. Wild, Mrs Woods. Apples, four varieties, Geo. Weston, G. Castle. Winter apples, W. Montgomery, G. Weston. Collection apples, J. Wild, W. Sterling. Peas, D. H. Ritchie, Fritz Wild. Collection nuts, D. H. Ritchie, F. Wild. Peaches, Mrs A. Cameron, I. F. Pass. Grapes, J. Wild, W. Townsend. Potatoes.—Early potatoes, J. Wild, Peter Campbell. Late potatoes, W. Montgomery, J. Wild. Low red mangolds, P. Cole, Ian Park, Yellow globe mangolds, G. Green, J. Salkeld. Beets, W. H. Woods. Cabbage, W. Townsend, G. Woods. Cauld-wr, 1 and 2 G. Woods. Carrots, W. Swaffield, John Pollock, Parsons, W. H. Woods, John Salkeld, Pamphills, W. H. Woods, W. Elliott, Spaul, W. Elliott, A. Johnston. Large English potato, G. Woods, F. Wild. Carrot plantations, W. Swaffield. Other onions, J. Wild, W. Swaffield. Turnips, J. Wild, W. Townsend.

COMMUNICATIONS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of our correspondents. Contributors to this department must confine themselves to public questions, and be brief.

The Season for Forestry Operations.

To the Editor of the Signal.

Sir,—Now is the time when if the owner of land desires the additional beauty, healthfulness, and fertility which the presence of well placed and sheltering groves or windbreaks are sure to bestow, he can work to advantage. All this month, and till frost comes, maples, oaks, hickories, ashes, elms, basswoods, beeches, pines and other evergreens can be obtained from the forest and planted with fair hopes of success. For the deciduous trees this is the best time; for evergreens early June is better; but these also will do well with care, and the spring is so hurried a season, that planting, if left till then, often gets left over altogether.

The practice of planting, encouraged, I think, to a great extent by the publication in its favor which several governments in America are wisely circulating, is becoming more common every year. In ten years from now it appears to me, from a desire to examine the cause of a few thousand trees well planted and given afterwards some slight care in mulching or stirring the ground with the cultivator, will be, night and day, improving in size and beauty, and giving not only to the owner, the pleasure of contemplating the work of his hands, and its continually increasing grace and beauty, but also increasing the passer by, that here is the residence of one who, and his avocations of crop and cattle raising, finds time to examine the cause of a few thousand trees well planted and given afterwards some slight care in mulching or stirring the ground with the cultivator, will be, night and day, improving in size and beauty, and giving not only to the owner, the pleasure of contemplating the work of his hands, and its continually increasing grace and beauty, but also increasing the passer by, that here is the residence of one who, and his avocations of crop and cattle raising, finds 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