

The Canada School Journal

IS PUBLISHED

THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH,

—AT—

11 WELLINGTON ST. WEST, TORONTO, ONT., CAN.

Subscription \$1.00 per year, payable in advance.

TO ADVERTISERS.

The SCHOOL JOURNAL is now the best medium in the Dominion of Canada for reaching Teachers and Trustees. As a proof of the rapid increase of its circulation ~~127~~ 1100 NEW SUBSCRIBERS were received from Nova Scotia in January, and 550 FROM NEW BRUNSWICK in February.

TORONTO, APRIL, 1879.

It is due to Dr Hodgins to state that after the March number of the JOURNAL had been printed we received a note from him correcting a statement contained in his letter respecting Examination papers. The Intermediate Examination is an exception to the general rule established, as for that Examination no papers have been sent but those ordered for the candidates.

THE NEW SCHOOL ACT.

The School Bill, which we took occasion to criticise last month while it was under the consideration of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, has been extensively modified, and made on the whole very much less objectionable than it was when first introduced. In our former comments we noticed the omission of any provision for the extension of the ballot to school elections. We still hold to the opinion that in cities and towns the use of the ballot in trustee elections is desirable, but we must admit that there seems to be very little chance of seeing it introduced for sometime to come. The Minister of Education was personally opposed to it, but left the question an open one, and the Assembly decided by an overwhelming majority to leave the mode of voting unchanged. Some improvement has been made in the School franchise, by admitting to its exercise all who are in a position to exercise either the Parliamentary or Municipal franchise, while none who now enjoy it are excluded. In cities, where the property franchise is \$400 on many small freeholders, and not a few women holding property in their own right would have been disfranchised had the various franchises been completely assimilated, as was proposed by several members, the House, wisely as we think, declined to accede to the proposition; so that, but for a little additional trouble growing out of new complications, the result of its decision is on this point quite satisfactory.

We are glad to see that, before the Bill passed, the clause giving Municipal Councils a vote on the capital expenditure of School Boards was somewhat modified, although not to so great an extent as we believe desirable. We think it unfortunate that the clause was inserted at all. According to the amended clause, the vote power is still vested in a two-thirds majority of the Councils, but they cannot exercise it absolutely. At the request of the School Board, the question has now to be submitted by the Council to a vote of the ratepayers, and in some cases the trouble and expense of such submission will be so

great as to make Councils unwilling to resort to it as a remedy for what they conceive to be unduly large expenditures. In rural school sections the ratepayers are hereafter to be consulted with respect to all capital expenditures as well as school sites. While the provisions of the Bill as modified are less objectionable than at first, we cannot see why the law should have been disturbed in this respect at all. We do not believe that a single instance of extravagant expenditure—keeping in view the requirements of the law in the matter of school accommodation—can be cited, and when a law is working well it should never be tinkered.

We notice that the very objectionable provision authorizing the issue of books from the Depository in lieu of the refund of 100 per cent., the booksellers supplying School Boards, has also been changed for the better by the introduction of a clause making it optional with the trustees to take the books or not as they please. It would have been much better to drop this Depository sub-section out of the Bill altogether; in its present form it only encumbers the statute-book and adds to the proverbial intricacy of the school law of the Province.

The invidious disability sought to be placed on Model and High School masters by the first draft of the Bill has been prevented by dropping out altogether the section depriving them of the right to act as County Board Examiners. This is as it should be, for there never was any sufficient justification for the proposed change in the law. It is very desirable to have for county examiners men of good educational standing, and possessed of some skill as experts, and the exclusion of the two clauses specified would very greatly limit the amount of available material from which County Councils have not the privilege of soliciting.

Only one other change in the Bill calls for notice here. The School Act has for many years contained a provision declaring the children of non-resident ratepayers to be for school purposes residents of any section or division in which their parents or guardians may happen to pay a school tax. This has in course of time given rise to a great practical grievance. Persons living in school sections adjoining villages have been in the habit of obtaining property within the latter at nominal cost or rental, and then sending their children to the village schools while their school tax goes in bulk to schools which they do not attend. In some cases the village ratepayers have been compelled to increase their school accommodation very much to meet this additional and unprofitable strain upon it, and complaints loud and deep have been the result. The remedy applied is exceedingly simple, consisting merely in the repeal of sub-section 4 of section 100 of the Public School Act. Henceforth, therefore, only the children of *bona fide* residents can enjoy residents' privileges with respect to Public Schools, the provision with respect to distance being the only privilege enjoyed by non-residents.

SCHOOL LEGISLATION.

The *Indiana School Journal* for March, speaking of the School Bill before the Legislature of that State, says joyously,