

scheme of superrannation similar to that which prevails in the Province of Ontario, was read by Dr. Howe, and on motion adopted.

School gradation.—Professor Robins, Montreal, was next called upon to speak upon the system of gradation in the schools in Montreal, by which about 4,000 children are led up from the "A B C" class to the first year's course in the University by about 120 teachers. Commencing at the first primary class he carried the teacher's attention, stage by stage, until the senior class was reached, and from there to the High School. Each class represented one year's work. He spoke of the necessity of forming an introductory primary grade, below the primary class. He also touched upon the work done in the High School for boys and in the High Schools for girls, until both had gained their degree of Associate in Arts. In speaking of the advantage to be gained by the system of grading schools, he dwelt specially upon the importance of the excellent division of labor, so that children of like ages and like capabilities were found in the same class; he referred to the moral influence of the teachers, and the great saving in labor and time by this system. He believed that the pupils were enabled to emulate each other. But apart from the value to the pupils, graded schools were of the first benefit to the community. The speaker contended that graded schools were far cheaper than others. In Boston the cost of instruction for each pupil was \$40 per year; in the Montreal High School for girls it cost about ninety cents, and even less for boys, while in the general schools the cost was about \$11 per pupil. He was glad to hear that Sherbrooke contemplated grading its schools, and believed it was the best thing it could do.

The President asked whether any provision was made in Montreal for infant schools.

Mr. Robins said no, although there was something approaching it in the Catholic schools. He thought the law provided wisely in saying that children should be kept with their parents until five years of age. He did not think it desirable that children should be sent to school at an earlier age. There were about 40 pupils to one teacher in the graded system. Indeed he doubted very much if the Commissioners could not be taken to task for mal-administration of funds if they formed schools for children under that age (5 years). He would like to have Dr. Miles' opinion on the subject.

Dr. Miles said they could not apply money for that purpose under the present aspect of the law, which provided that monthly fees, over and above the ordinary rates levied, should, subject to certain exemptions, be payable for every child in a School Municipality between the ages of 7 and 14 years; although the right to attend a district school on payment of the established monthly fees was extended to children of 5 to 16. The speaker stated that he did not know of any instance of a claim being set up for the attendance of a child under 5 years; although such claim had been made in behalf of scholars over 16. This, occasionally, was resisted by teachers and school boards, but in most cases of the kind which had been referred to the Department of Public Instruction, it had been recommended to the parties concerned not to stand upon the strict letter of the law, provided the scholars thus seeking admission, or to continue attendance, after attaining the maximum school age, were well conducted, submissive to the teacher and the regulations, and that they should not be considered entitled to an extra or undue share of the teacher's time and attention. It was manifest that cases might arise when it was convenient, if not absolutely necessary to extend facilities far obtaining elementary instruction in the common schools to young people over 14 and even 16 years of age, and the Department had always favoured such practice when no good reason for exclusion could be advanced. At the same time the law, at present stood as he had represented.

A Member asked for information upon the style in the construction of school buildings.

Professor Robins said the unit of arrangement of the architecture of the schools in Montreal was a suite of two rooms; one fitted with desks for about 54 children; a gallery behind, communicates with the school room, and will accommodate about a similar number. The gallery has been found useful for many purposes, more particularly for recitation.

He described the arrangement of a plan in the six radiating rooms of the Girls' High School, pointing out the special advantages in each.

Messrs. Master and Inspector Hubbard asked questions concerning the conduct of recitations in Arithmetic, Geography, &c., in the Montreal graded schools to which Professor Robins returned suitable replies.

The President invited further discussion upon the subject seeing that there were some of the Sherbrooke School Commissioners present.

School Commissioner Foss expressed himself as having been much edified by hearing Mr. Robins' able statements in relation to graded schools, and said he would in all probability have occasion to consult him on the subject.

It was then moved and seconded: That a vote of thanks be, and is hereby given, to Inspector Robins for his kindness and trouble in

having come from Montreal to this Convention, and for having given it the benefit of his experience and ability on the subject of graded schools. Carried unanimously.

Inspection of the Superior Schools.—Mr. Inspector Hubbard rose and drew attention to the inconvenient time appointed by the Council of Public Instruction (in April and May) for inspecting the Superior Schools, and begged to move, seconded by Mr. Inspector McLaughlin:—

That a memorial be presented to the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, suggesting that the special inspection of academies should be made in the months of February and March instead of April and May, as announced.

Dr. Miles said that such inspections of the Academies and Model Schools receiving aid from the funds for promoting superior education were considered necessary as being supplementary to the means of arriving at a sufficient knowledge of the condition of the schools afforded by the usual annual reports prescribed by law. It did not seem to be a matter of extreme importance whether May and June or any other period should be named for the making of these inspections:—besides, since other points than those indicated in the usual annual reports were to be investigated and reported on—such as the state of the school property and premises, school appliances and internal arrangements, the qualifications of the teacher and success of the scholars. The regular inspectors were "Inspectors of Common Schools," not specially charged with inspecting and reporting upon the academies and common schools, and hence the natural desire of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction to obtain special information and reports of the academies and model schools with a view to their own better guidance in the recommendations which they might make respecting the distribution of the Superior Education money.

Mr. Brown, speaking for the schools in the townships, said these in the rural districts filled up more largely in the month of October. If they were desirous of getting at the actual work done by the teacher, it should be between the months of April and October. He also called attention to the irregular manner in which the total attendance was arrived at during the three school terms, as it was usual in some instances to include the same pupils twice over.

The President ruled this portion of the subject out of order, and confined the Convention to the motion under discussion.

Mr. Masten (Coaticook) thought it would be better to have the inspection at the time recommended.

Rev. A. L. Holmes, Principal of Stanstead College, was of opinion that examinations should be as late in the year as possible, so as to get at a fair test of the pupil's capacity. He did not think it out of place to say that the actual number of pupils in the school when the Inspector was present was not so fair a test as the average of the year. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Law once also spoke to the motion.

Rev. Mr. Lindsay questioned whether the inspectors would be able to visit the schools at the time mentioned.

Rev. A. Duff did not see the utility of examiners at all. Were not the inspectors sufficiently able to discharge the duty? The Province was crying out about the want of money, and here was an opportunity for cutting down expenses.

The President said that the special inspections made had worked out good results. The object was to elevate the status of the academies, not to lower it; the gentlemen appointed were men of culture and did their work well.

Inspector Hubbard did not see how they were going to report upon the condition of academies if they did not visit them. (Hear, hear.)

The President said Government aid had not at first been given to Academies so much because of their usefulness or for the amount of work done, or on the basis of the number of scholars, as because of the influence which may have been promised by those members of the Legislature who had interest.

The motion was then put and carried.

The purchase of Books.—The Convention was next occupied in considering the best way for teachers to avail themselves of the recent arrangements for purchase of books at the Provincial Depository.

Dr. Miles stated that it was the intention of the Department to give every facility in this respect, but the Department did not intend to enter into competition with stationer's stores.

The intention of the law on this subject was to obviate the necessity for any child at a public school to be unprovided with the books and articles indispensably requisite for his or her use in class, and, to that end, to secure the supply of such necessities at the lowest possible cost. Regulations, sanctioned by the Lieut. Governor in council had been adopted and published, to which school boards and others were expected to conform in making their requisitions from the Superintendent, whose sole aim it was to see the law carried out in the interest of the great mass of the people of the Province—the rate payers, parents, guardians, teachers, scholars. It was thought