

THE MEETING.—When the annual meeting is convened it is to be duly organized and the business transacted. The following outline indicates the *usual* and most important matters to be transacted by the annual meeting:—

"1. To elect a Chairman of the meeting. 2. To elect a Secretary to record the proceedings of the meeting. 3. To elect a new Trustee (or Trustees, as the case may be). 4. To receive the report of the board of Trustees concerning the educational condition of the section during the year, its finances, and the requirements of the section during the ensuing year. 5. To determine, by a vote of a majority of the rate-payers present, what amount shall be raised by the section during the ensuing year for any or all of the objects authorized by law."

No ballot.—It is to be borne in mind that in a majority of sections, no ballot is to be used in determining which member of the Board of Trustees is to go out of office. This being the *FOURTH* annual meeting in most sections (the first election having been had in Oct. 1865), the Trustee who has served the longest is to retire from office. The following is the provision of the Law:—

"At the first annual meeting of any section, under this act,* the majority of the rate-payers of the section present shall elect from their own number three trustees, and at the second and third annual meetings one of the trustees elected at the first meeting shall go out of office by ballot, and at each annual meeting thereafter he who has served the longest shall retire from office, and each of the vacancies shall be filled by the election of a new trustee; provided always, that he whose term of office has expired may be re-elected, with his own consent, his time of service to date from such re-election."

Ballot.—Sections which were organized subsequently to October 1865, will, of course, determine by ballot which of those members of the Board who have been the longest in service is to go out of office,—whether the members of the Board were elected at a former annual or special meeting, or were appointed by the School Commissioners. In this connexion we repeat the remarks made in the *JOURNAL* for August 1867:—One of the most convenient modes of voting by ballot is for each rate-payer present to write upon a slip of paper the name of the trustee who he thinks should retire. The chairman having counted the ballots, declares the office of him who receives the largest number to be vacant. A ballot is often taken by the use of objects of two colours, or kinds, as black beans and white beans, beans and peas. It is of no great moment what materials are used, the object being merely to enable the rate-payers, in a delicate way, to determine which trustee shall vacate his office. When the three trustees have been in office for the same period, it will be necessary to determine which of the three shall retire. The ballot must in that case be repeated if necessary, till one has received the votes of a majority of ballots.

The office of trustee is most honourable, and only persons of intelligence, business habits, and educational zeal should be chosen as trustees. Such men should not shrink from a faithful discharge of the duties imposed upon them by the people. All should remember that society has claims upon them, and that no claim can be stronger than that which involves the welfare of the young. Good trustees will generally secure good teachers, good accommodations, and good schools.

A spirit of liberality should be shewn by the annual meeting in providing for the support of the school. Ample provision should be made for comfortable and clean rooms, a good supply of school books and necessary apparatus, the teacher's salary, in short for whatever is needed to carry on successfully as well-equipped a school as the means of the section will permit. In this way the section will have little difficulty in obtaining the services of the best men as trustees. Such trustees will carry on the school as economically as is consistent with its efficiency, and however large the amount voted, they will expend only what is needed.

Immediately after the annual meeting, each Board of Trustees should transmit to the Inspector, an outline of all the business transacted.

* The Act of 1865.

RETURNS.

IT may safely be said that our progress towards obtaining full and reliable School Statistics since the commencement of the educational reform, has been quite equal to the progress made in any other branch of the work; and that is saying very much. In

this, however, as in other matters, we still fall a good deal short of that perfect standard to which we must aspire. As the close of the school-year is now at hand, when in addition to the half-yearly return the more elaborate Annual Returns are due, it is a fitting opportunity to say a few words on the subject.

A really full and correct return is a work of art. To the person whose business it is to prepare statistics for publication, such a Return is a delight. Among the Returns of 1867 there were many such—a very much larger proportion than ever before in this province; Returns in which every query was answered with such an evident understanding of its exact bearing, that one could not for a moment doubt the correctness of the answer. But they were not all such. In some not more than half of the columns were filled. In others all the queries were answered, but with such a transparently mistaken notion of their meaning in many cases, as to make the answers wholly worthless. And in yet others the answers given were often so contradictory as to render the whole Return unfit for use. For such Returns we have no toleration. They are an eyesore and a nuisance. It seems to us that there is no good reason why any Return should be either incomplete or incorrect in any important particular. The form of a query may not apply perfectly to the case in hand, but it is couched in the plainest terms, and will always admit of a rational reply. The queries, as a rule, are neither intricate nor abstruse, but refer to simple matters of fact, and require only simple matter-of-fact answers. A little study, a little care, a little anxiety to supply just the information asked for, is, with even the most humble capacity for dealing with such matters, quite enough to do the whole business.

The more difficult questions—if indeed any of them can be said to be difficult—are not always the ones that oftenest receive incorrect or absurd replies. One would think that there could be no mistake made in reporting how many of the pupils in a school are Boys and how many Girls. Yet in the whole range of the returns there is not one question on which more mistakes are made—unless indeed it be in giving the numbers of the different ages. It is no rarity to meet with such a sequence of answers as the following:—Total number of pupils 48; No. of Boys 26; No. of Girls 28. Or this:—No. of pupils under 5 years of age 3; No. from 5 to 15 years of age 39; No. over 15 years 12; Total number of pupils 51. Who can possibly frame any excuse for such work as that! It is simply scandalous. How any Trustee or Teacher could deliberately sign a certificate under such rubbish solemnly declaring that he had "faithfully sought" to give accurate answers to all the enquiries found in the Return, or that he had "carefully examined" all the answers given and found them to be "to the best of his knowledge and belief correct in every particular," altogether passes comprehension. After seeing many such things, one begins to doubt whether the mathematicians are not going too far when they assume as an axiom that "the sum of the parts is equal to the whole." To some it seems not to be a self-evident truth, or rather not to be truth at all. But as we said before these are exceptional cases, and let us hope that any such may soon obtain clearer light on the subject.

It is freely confessed that there may often be some difficulty in giving a perfectly satisfactory answer to a question. It is probably impossible to construct a form of Return that can apply with perfect equality and completeness to the varying circumstances of all sections. Yet we cannot but believe that with proper care, and a reasonable effort on all hands, we may obtain a body of statistics sufficiently uniform and complete to answer all the purposes in view. In order that there may be greater completeness in the future, it may be well to state a few general principles by which a person should be guided in filling up a return:

1. Every question should be read carefully with a view to learn *exactly* what it is that is asked for.

2. Let no question go unanswered. If you have not the materials for giving an *exact* reply, give the best answer you can,—always keeping on the safe side—and add a note on the margin saying that the answer is *approximate*. If you are not sure that you understand the question, give what you *suppose* to be the information desired, and add a note explaining what you have taken the question to mean. If you think the question *ambiguous*, give as many answers as will ensure that one or other of them contains the desired information.