

the past year, first-class teachers seldom failed to secure employment. Second-class teachers were always in demand. What shall I say of third-class teachers? There are too many of them, and their field of labor is rapidly narrowing in New Brunswick. Many third-class teachers are doing excellent work, but a teacher of this class who is content to stand still here, has not the requisite amount of ambition to properly qualify for an instructor. The excessive number of third-class teachers was produced, no doubt, by the short term system at the Normal school, and we have to note the lengthening of the term at that institution as one of the most progressive steps in the educational history for the year. We may express the hope that many will pass before any retrogression will take place in this particular. This is a guarantee for fewer low-class and unskilled teachers, and less competition and underbidding.

It cannot be denied that enthusiasm in educational matters has somewhat waned since the inception of the school law. This, perhaps, was to be expected, as novelty always excites attention; but the people of this Province are not by any means dead as to the advantages afforded by free schools, nor do they lack appreciation for well directed effort. A little revival in these matters is necessary, and none are so well situated to effect it as the teachers themselves. Instead of constantly bemoaning the severity of our lot, and bringing on ourselves contempt by—as one newspaper styles it,—our constant “wail for cash,” let us set to work as in other professions to achieve success, and we cannot fail to claim its reward.

A very successful Institute has been held during the year in St. John, and no doubt these annual gatherings possess many advantages, not the least among which is the social intercourse afforded by them to teachers. The papers read, too, and the discussions participated in, have their value. But are we practical enough? Do we not have too many papers and not enough discussion? Everything seems too hurried, and by the time those who always speak two or three times, no matter what comes up, in order to explain their particular position, have spoken, the time has expired and the benefits are greatly curtailed thereby. Many favour the idea next year of an Inter-provincial Institute embracing the Maritime Provinces. It is understood to be favoured by Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Many teachers who attended the Provincial Institute remained to attend the Summer School of Science, which may be considered another step in advance, as it was convened, for the first time, last year, and the benefits resulting from it must have been very great.

Some new text-books were introduced during the year, and as their recommendation was prompted by experience and practical knowledge, they no doubt will confer the advantages expected of them. The new arithmetic is well conceived from an educational standpoint, but has been nearly spoiled typographically. The text on the science subjects by Dr. Bailey is all that was expected, and will no doubt be a valuable aid to both teachers and pupils. Such a book has long been needed. The new copy-books have not as yet received a very warm welcome, but perhaps time and use may tend to reconcile them to the profession. They are perhaps useful rather than ornamental, and this may be as it should be.

Another decided step in advance was the inauguration of an Arbor Day throughout the Province. If we are to judge from the number of trees planted, and the amount of ornamentation to the school grounds, the action of the Board of Education in allowing and appointing the day was a very popular one.

The position taken by our schools in the Colonial Exhibition showed that they were second to none in the excellence of their work, and demonstrated the strength of our free school system.

It was confidently hoped by the friends of education that before this time a compulsory clause would have been introduced into our school law, as it should have been long ago. When we consider that of the total enrolment of the Province but little over fifty per cent. of the pupils attend school every day, and that nearly one-fourth of the children of schoolable age do not attend school at all, it is surely high time that such a clause was enacted. Many thought that a permissive compulsory clause would be carried last winter. The bill passed the lower house but was not introduced into the upper, and so we will have to wait to chronicle even this much until some other year, it may be hoped this.

Another change that was anxiously looked for—and this concerns trustees more than teachers—was a change in the present assessment law to make property pay taxes in the district in which it is situated. Much hardship and consequent complaint arises from the working of the law as it now is. Villages and thickly settled places which are well able to support schools of their own resources, are deriving no small amount of support each year from remote and poor districts, often in consequence rendered too poor to support schools but for a portion of the year.

While we are speaking of trustees, we may refer to a very bad and growing habit of extending the summer holidays at will, disregarding entirely the teachers'