



VOL. XXXIV

OCTOBER 22nd, 1906.

No. 1

## SCHOOLS OF ONTARIO.

### SCARCITY OF TEACHERS.

THERE are some features of the educational situation in Ontario that are unsatisfactory and demand immediate attention from the authorities at Toronto. From all quarters come complaints of the scarcity of teachers for the Public Schools. In rural districts the want is exceptionally severe. In order to keep open the schools inspectors are issuing a large number of permits.

Another complaint is that the number of male recruits to the ranks of the teachers is ominously small. There is a steadily decreasing proportion of men available for rural schools. The percentage has fallen from 57.26 in 1867 to 21.72 in 1904. Unless something is done to make teaching a more attractive vocation the lower grades of the work will be left entirely in the hands of young girls.

The causes of the development of the present situation are quite evident. Prevailing conditions a few years ago are in sharp contrast with those just outlined. In the past the supply of teachers was more than sufficient to meet the demand for them. The inevitable result of this overcrowding of the profession was a reduction in the rate of remuneration. A competition ensued for every vacant school, and this involved a loss of dignity and influence on the part of the teachers. At

the same time the attitude of trustees became exacting and ungenerous. That under such circumstances self-respecting men turned their attentions to other callings should occasion no surprise. For a time, however, the deficiency of male teachers was not felt owing to the increased number of young women turned out from the county Model Schools. But conditions surrounding employment in rural schools have become so unfavorable as to repel even girls who wish to teach for a few years. A minor position in an urban school is more attractive than work in the country districts under inconsiderate trustees.

The opening up of the West and New Ontario is another cause of the decreasing supply of teachers. Young men are going to these districts by the hundred, lured by the openings in every line of work. For teachers, too, the West holds out more attractive positions. Salaries are more generous; the profession is held in higher esteem. It is further true in the more settled districts there is a growing demand for young men who have had school training.

The question of the means of remedying the defects which have developed in the educational affairs of the rural districts is one of great practical importance and of greater difficulty. The low rate of remuneration being