

is that which secures in the highest degree the culture and the development of pupils at the smallest cost. Our aim should be to obtain at the minimum of expense the most appropriate books to place in the hands of school children. Has a Government a right to interfere in local management so far as to decide the books which shall or shall not be used in schools? Certainly it has, if the schools are partly supported by a Government grant. It becomes merely a question of how far it is wise for a general Government to interfere in local matters. It is absolutely necessary to have uniformity in text-books to some extent. For instance, class and school uniformity are essential so as to prevent confusion in teaching and to lessen the expense of books to pupils. Municipal uniformity in cities and towns is also requisite, as then pupils moving from one school to another in the same municipality are not obliged to buy a new set of books. Is Provincial uniformity desirable? The advantages claimed for it are as follows:

I. Removal of families from one part of the Province to another would cause no inconvenience by requiring the purchase of new books.

II. Uniformity of language and method in all the schools of the Province would make changes of teachers less injurious than if a variety of text-books were used.

III. The Government can control more readily the character of the education given in the schools.

IV. It places the selection of the text-books in the hands of the most competent persons.

The central authorities would be more likely to decide correctly, if they should be more cultured, and possessed of larger experience; and they should give the subject more time and attentive consideration than local authorities could do.

V. If sections or municipalities purchased the books they could make better terms, or the Government might make an immense contract for the Province at a small advance on cost.

Its disadvantages are:—

I. The injury to mental growth and originality resulting from the parrot-like repetition of exactly similar language in definitions and statements of principles.

II. Subsistence of teachers to the mere words of their text-books, causing a lack of desire to keep up with the current of advanced thought upon the subjects which they have to teach and the methods of teaching them.

III. The difficulty in obtaining a list of books which would meet the approval of all or even the majority of teachers and school officers.

IV. Difficulty or impossibility of enforcing it. (Since options were allowed, and teachers and officers began to examine text-books with a view to selecting the best, they have stepped beyond the fixed boundary.)

V. It interferes with local management, and prevents the adaptation of the books to the special necessities of certain places.

VI. The mechanical execution of the books is certain, and the internal character is likely to be worse than if books were allowed to stand or fall on their merits alone. Publishers will not revise if the Government compels people to buy their books. They will keep up with the times if the books have to make their own way.

Mr. Hughes recommended, therefore, that local authorities be allowed to exercise the fullest liberty in selecting text-books, provided that they conform to the standard laid down by the central educational authorities. The Department fixes a standard for teachers, to which they must attain; the local authorities select from those who have risen to the fixed standard the teacher best suited, in their opinion, to their needs and circumstances. Trustees may not engage whom they please to teach their school. They may do so, however, from among those authorized to teach. As great evil would undoubtedly result from unlimited license in engaging teachers, so much injury might result from allowing an unrestricted choice of text-books. The Department fixes a programme of study, and states how far each grade shall go in every subject of the school course. This, on the partially adjustable plan of Hon. Mr. Crooks, which allows options to a certain extent, is not only desirable, but essential. Is it not enough that the text-books in our schools should conform to the requirements of this programme? Would it not be sufficient, if the publishers were required, as in England, to adapt their text-books to the work of the various grades? Our readers are supposed to be adapted to the several divisions of the schools, why not our arithmetics and other books which are used by all classes? With this single limitation, the writer held that to the local authorities belongs the right to select their own text-books. This claim is in perfect

harmony with the present administration of the Educational Department. It also corresponds with the working of our municipal and general government. Who are the local educational authorities who should determine which books should be used in our schools? Not the teachers, because they change too often. The same objection applies to the trustees alone. The Inspector does not often change, he is a permanent officer during good behaviour. He is also to a certain extent a Government officer, and through him the Government could have all the local control it is entitled to. If the Government cannot trust this function to Inspectors, they are certainly unfit for their positions. They surely have to perform other duties quite as important as the selection of the best text-book for use in their districts. The duty is a very simple one if they are restricted in their choice to those officially recognized by the Education Department as conforming to the programme and standard laid down. If the matter was left in the hands of the trustees and the Inspector, changes would not take place too often. The danger would be that they would not be changed often enough.

AN AMERICAN VISITOR.

Inspector Hughes introduced Prof. Jones, Inspector of the Public Schools of Erie, Pa., to the Association, as a gentleman who took an active part in educational matters. Mr. Jones was warmly received, and made a few remarks. He said he was pleased with the earnest and practical manner in which the teachers discussed the topics that had come before them, and hoped the discussion would be of benefit to them.

The Association rose till evening.

EVENING SESSION.

The Association resumed at eight o'clock, Dr. McLellan in the chair. The attendance was large, many ladies being among the audience.

MORAL CULTURE.

Rev. Dr. McVicar, Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, was introduced, and delivered a lecture on "Moral Culture an Essential Factor in Public Education."

[The address of Dr. McVicar will appear in full in the October number of the JOURNAL.]

THE RAILWAYS.

Inspector Hughes drew attention to the desirability of allowing teachers to travel at $1\frac{1}{2}$ fare for return trips during the midsummer and Christmas holidays. He thought it would be a great boon to the teachers of the Province generally if this privilege were extended to them, and moved for the appointment of a committee, consisting of Adam Purslow, M.A., Port Hope, Inspector Smith, of Hamilton and the mover, to confer with the railway companies with that end in view.

The motion was carried.

A VOTE OF THANKS.

was tendered to those railway companies who had granted reduced fares to teachers attending the Convention, and also to the Minister of Education for allowing the Association to meet in the Normal School.

The Association then adjourned, to meet again in the second week of August, 1880.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SECTION.

Mr. H. D. Dickenson, of Stratford, read a paper on "Educational Journals." Such journals, he held, are manifestly essential. In the present day every institution of any extent has a periodical conducted specially in its interests. Teachers need this auxiliary as well as others. As church societies, conferences, synods, etc., control their denominational organs and elect their directors and editors, this Association should so control the educational journal of the country. If teachers would organize a joint stock company so that many of them would be interested in it, it could not fail of being a success. A monthly magazine would be most suitable at present. No journal in existence just now exactly meets these requirements. The advocates of a particular school, college, or publishing house cannot do this, their object being not to promote teachers' interests in general as much as those of its proprietors.

The speaker proposed a plan for conducting such a periodical in accordance with these ideas.