

for their perusal. They will prove a mine of wealth to teachers and others, especially those parts of the work which deal specifically with the actual settlement of these provinces by the now historically famous United Empire Loyalists of Canada.

HOME WORK OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

When so much is written on this subject by theorists and would-be reformers, it is a treat to read the following sensible views of the case, which are taken from the *Scotsman* and *The Schoolmaster*:

As regards elementary school children, the case is by no means so clear, more especially in England, where the amount of home work exacted from the children is, as a rule, much less than it is in Scotland. It is easy to talk about the Code; but it is certain that if the Code made no demand, and if teachers and scholars were left to manage matters at their will, the outcry would be much greater than it is at present against the abuses of the public school system. More elasticity may be desirable; but the difficulty is to admit elasticity and to keep the door shut against the numerous evils that would almost certainly seek for admission along with it. A system which is applied to thousands of schools and to millions of children, and which involves the expenditure of millions of the public money, must be administered both with strictness and with a certain degree of uniformity. The truth which it is most likely to violate is the elementary one, that all minds are not cast in the same mould, and do not reach the same degree of development at the same age or in the same time. The pinch of the present rule is no doubt felt most in connection—not with the individual examination of scholars; that is both right and necessary; but—with the individual payments which make up the grant. Perhaps the best and fairest way to remove this objection would be to adopt the plan previously suggested here—to examine the scholars individually as at present, but to make the payments depend on the average attainments of each class or standard. At the same time, it cannot be denied, and should not be concealed, that much if not most of the cerebral disorder or weakness ascribed to the Code is really due to the neglect of parents. The root of the evil is physical, not mental. If children were properly fed and fitly clothed, if they dwelt in well-sized and cleanly houses, they would be able to stand all the work the Code puts upon them, and even more, without injury either to body or to mind.

The loudest outcry, however, has come from the middle-class schools, and chiefly from middle-class schools for girls. It is not difficult to understand why this should be so. It is on the middle class that the pressure of education, as distinguished from educational pressure in the most objectionable sense, is greatest. With the members of that class education is now more than ever the passport to success in life. Every man who wishes to get on in the world must have at least a fair education; and now, it must be added, every woman who wishes to lead a useful and independent life must be educated. This does not necessarily imply oppressive or injurious brain-work, but it opens the way for it; and competition is now so great, and ambition so active, that the way thus opened is too often trodden. The peculiarity of middle-class education, which makes it specially liable to abuse in this respect, is the number of subjects which it is made to include. It is not uncommon to find boys of fifteen learning four languages beside their own, and girls of the same age learning three foreign languages, besides history, mathematics, music, and any number of occasional arts and sciences. Clearly this is putting too much work on the machine for good work to be done, or for the machine to remain unimpaired. And the more complete the organization of the school, the greater the pressure. In a well-organized school, every department has its separate teacher. Every teacher thinks his own subject the most important, and he gives to his pupils an amount of work which has no reference to the similar demands of his colleagues at the same time. It should be the duty of a head master or a head mistress to regulate the working of the whole school; but these persons generally have their own classes and subjects to look after, and, instead of restraining others, they sin themselves. Here, too, as in the elementary school, peculiarities and differences of power are not sufficiently regarded. Each mind is treated as if it had been cast in the same mould as every other, and the same amount and kind of work are expected from the

weak as from the strong. Then, it must be said, we fear, that the habit is growing of casting the real hard work of learning and teaching on the home hours, which should be given to relaxation and to the recovery of tone lost at school. The scholars have to work double ties. They have their night shift as well as their day shift, and the night shift is generally the harder of the two. This is to make life a weariness to them, and home anything but a pleasant place. It cannot be understood too soon or too well, that teaching does not consist in listening to a recital of tasks previously coned with much labour—not in taking things out of the mouths of scholars, but in putting things into their heads—and that teaching in this sense ought to be done by the teacher in school hours. It is done in every well-conducted school, and by every teacher who takes a real interest in his work: and happily there are many such. But there are also some schools and some teachers of whom as much cannot be said, and it is in connection with them that educational pressure is really felt, and is doing real harm. Parental pressure ought to be sufficient to counteract the evil.

Public attention has not been withdrawn from the subject of brain-pressure in educational matters. Mrs. Garrett-Anderson delivered a lecture to the members of the Social Science Association, in which she dealt chiefly with the question as it affected the best secondary schools for girls. After discussing the medical aspects of the matter, and the division of responsibility which lay between mother and mistress, the lecturer made the following suggestions:—(1) To get the elements of knowledge well and thoroughly taught at an early age, and not to urge the child to make up for early neglect by taking a very extensive range of subjects as soon as she goes to a good school; (2) to accept two and a half or three hours of class as long enough at one time for almost all children, and to provide two or three short intervals of rest—e. g., five minutes or ten minutes in each hour—during even this time; (3) to insist upon every girls' school having a playground; (4) to aim at greatly reducing the amount of writing in the home work; (5) to reduce the number of examinations, and especially to make them as unstimulating as possible, and to apply them with great reserve to the children most likely to shine in them; and (6) not to aim at completing the education by the age of eighteen. The main purpose of Girton and Newham Colleges was to encourage young women to continue their education in an organized manner after they cease to need the restraints imposed upon school-girls, and the existence of these colleges rendered it more than ever unnecessary to attempt to teach girls everything they ought to know in early adolescence. These suggestions are all sensible and to the point. Any blame as to the matter of over-pressure must be placed to the account of the parents, the public as a whole, and the demands under the various examination schemes of the period. If the parents require their children to pass a given ordeal, the teacher must do her best to secure success. Credit is at stake, and competition acts as a spur to excitement in the race of both teachers and taught. Some of the suggestions which have been made by Mrs. Garrett-Anderson are applicable to all schools, and none know that fact better than teachers themselves. It is a good thing that the public have apparently become interested in this subject on their own account. It is well to work hard and steadily, for Mr. Fitch's experience will be that of others. In the course of the discussion he declared that, as the result of his experience, he had found the greatest amount of health, cheerfulness, and happiness existing among pupils in schools where the intellectual aim and the instruction given were the highest. That may be quite true, where examinations are not superadded in excess, and where an unhealthy stimulus is not applied in vain searching after too great a degree of excellence. Educational work will ever continue to do less harm than educational worry.

Contributions and Correspondence.

GENERAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS.

BY H. L. SLAOK, M.A., PUBLIC SCHOOL INSPECTOR, LANARK CO.

I.—TO TRUSTERS.

The law clearly defines your *Duties* and your *Powers*, which you will find fully set forth in the "Compendium"—pages 46 to 52—and in the Departmental Regulations, 152-158. There are, how-