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THE ONTARIO EDUC'L SYSTEM AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

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Barrister, etc.

The Ontario Public School system has in it much to be commended; but while it is so generally lauded surely we cannot be so blind as to see no defects in it, or so provincial in our conceit as to ignore the practical work and experience of other countries. Before considering any definite proposal which might strengthen the Ontario Public School system and increase its influence, let us view some aspects of its practical work. That it is mechanical, no one can deny. It aims at turning out every child educated in a Public School in accordance with a general average. It takes no account of one child physically strong and another physically weak, one mentally strong and another mentally weak. It cannot concern itself about the future calling or position of its pupils, except as limited to each school section as a unit, and then only governed by the law of general average. So mechanical has this system become that no one, I venture to say, takes the least interest in the election of trustees as educationalists. The restrictions in our system reducing the whole to a machine have, I believe, deprived the parent of any interest he might otherwise have in the schools, and he cares less who controls them. We never hear of a trustee seeking election on any policy looking to the betterment of the system, or the work accomplished there-

by. In common decency the aspiring trustee parades, at the time, economy and efficiency as the grounds for his election, and then, alas! that is the last we hear even of these.

So mechanical is the system that no parent can take any personal interest in the education of his children. What interest can he take when he has no choice? But to the school of his section his children must go whether he likes it or not, whether this school is suitable for his children or not. This has a very serious effect upon the relationship of parent to child. It is acknowledged that the responsibilities resting on a parent towards his child have the best possible influence with him for good. And in so far as the State assumes to lift this responsibility from the shoulders of the parent an injury is done to the community. Again, how is it that the average length of service of a Public School teacher is so short, and that so many use the position simply as a stepping stone to other walks in life? Is it not that the limitations and restrictions in our system give no opportunity for the capable teacher to put forth his best efforts and to reap his due reward? Like the school trustee passing on to aldermanic and parliamentary honors the Public School teacher forsakes his calling as a teacher, and takes to some other more lucrative profession, all the public money spent upon his train-