

clothes, ride in better buggies and travel oftener by rail than their fathers did. But, though the hardships may be less, what is commonly called the struggle for existence is probably not less, and parents are under as great pressure as ever to make their children useful and to start them in money getting. Then, as to the culture, some of the immigrants were, no doubt, very ignorant, but others were very well educated. We doubt if there are more of the native generation who find themselves better educated than their fathers were, then there are those who are forced to acknowledge that their fathers wrote a better hand and brought with them from the old country a more solid education than they themselves were able to acquire during the scattered days of schooling that were open to them in their own childhood.

The sparseness of some of the school populations is the evil with which Ontario is at present trying to grapple. The great Dr. Egerton Ryerson, the founder of the Ontario school system, set up as his standard a school district of very small dimensions. His plan was that each school should have a separate school board. In this he did better for his province than whoever gave shape to the school system of Quebec. Here the school districts are large and contain many schools each. So long as a plurality of schools is permitted in a district there is a constant pressure on the part of the taxpayers to have the money expended in their own neighborhoods. Thus, schools are multiplied and the resources for each attenuated. Moreover, as each taxpayer's money goes into a general fund, the whole study of the people is how to pay as little as possible. Where, on the other hand, there is a separate administration for every school there is naturally the same emulation between one district and another, as there notoriously is between one housekeeper and another,

as to which will have the best, and whatever improvement one gets the next one wants. Thus far Dr. Ryerson did for the best. Nor could he have done other than he did in determining the maximum size of school districts, which was naturally fixed by the utmost distance that a child of school age could walk twice daily. It has been found in practice, however, in districts of country far more thickly settled than the most of Ontario that, what with distance, with bad roads, what with delicacy of constitution, enough of families could not be grouped to carry on a successful school, and the tendency is to have schools, in proportion to the number of scholars, many and bad. The plan that has been adopted in some countries is to replace two or three such schools by one, and to arrange to have a wagon drive in every morning on each road that converges on the school to bring the children from the more distant homes and take them home again at night. Such a machinery of reliable intercommunication between different parts of the country would no doubt develop in many ways towards the lessening of the isolation of our rural population. It might easily, for instance, become a daily mail delivery and a parcel post, if not a passenger service.

When all is done it is a question whether what is wanted is not a compulsory school system such as exists in all countries on the other side of the sea. After all, this is the logical thing. Popular government demands education. The public has a right that the children should be educated. This is the duty of the parents as much as it is their duty to feed the children. They have no more claim on the State to teach their children than to clothe them. The State gets, as we know, into all sorts of trouble when it attempts to do the parents' duty. We only quarrel on broad lines as yet, as