

was mildly treated by the old legislators of Massachusetts, when they only fined him and bound out his children to persons who would give them education. Free schools, supported by assessment, are the only sure remedies for this evil. These would, I have no doubt, at once nearly double the ordinary attendance of pupils. In the mean time, the proper use of school registers, with the co-operation of teachers and parents in using such means as are in their power, may tend to diminish its prevalence.

*"School Houses and Furniture.*—In travelling through the Province, I have directed much attention to the proper construction of school-houses; believing that material improvements in this respect are absolutely necessary to the proper working of the schools. I have exhibited improved plans at the public meetings and lectures, and in every case where I have found buildings in process of erection or repair, have suggested such improvements of plan as seemed to be requisite. The law makes it one of my duties to give information respecting the embellishment of grounds on which school-houses stand. Unfortunately too many of the schools have no ground whatever attached to them, being built by permission on private property, or on the highway. Of 165 teachers who have answered the questions addressed to them, only 33 report that their school-houses have any ground attached to them, the remainder being on private property or on the highway. Only 5 of the 165 schools have any means of ventilation other than the door and windows; 16 have more than one apartment; 24 have door mats and scrapers, and hat pins; 20 have wood-houses or other out-houses; 26 have seats with backs, or the desks arranged so as to form backs.

*"Common Schools—their Study and Discipline.*—Our Common Schools are very diversified in character, studies and efficiency. Some are mere primary schools of a very low grade, teaching only reading, writing, and a little arithmetic; others, in addition to all the branches required by law in common schools, teach the classics, mathematics, or modern languages, and rise nearly, if not altogether, to the level of many of the so-called grammar schools.

*"Moral and Religious Training in Common Schools.*—In every school there must be more or less of the formation of moral or immoral habits; and it is of the utmost importance that high moral influences should here be brought to bear on the mind of the young. This is, however, rather a matter of discipline and training, than of direct instruction; since moral teaching apart from example and the formation of habit, is nearly useless. The good teacher should be in his own person a pattern of good morality. He should watch every deviation from rectitude on the part of the children, and kindly endeavour to impress them with the evil of every bad practice. He should endeavour, in the discipline of the school, to cultivate and strengthen the higher moral sentiments, and avoid every thing of a degrading character. He should aim to regulate his school, rather by the consciences and benevolent feelings of the pupils than by fear. Under our law, the religious instruction to be communicated becomes a matter of mutual arrangement between the parents and teacher. Thus those parents who have confidence in the teachers as a religious instructor for their children, can have the benefit of such instruction; and those who have not such confidence, are under no necessity of having views which they do not relish obtruded upon their children. In this way, there is practically a large amount of religious instruction communicated in the schools; and many of the teachers are persons of true piety, who give such instruction, when desired, with earnestness and zeal. Even when parents belong to different denominations, it is not absolutely necessary to forego the benefits of religious instruction, since, despite all the differences that subsist, the great truths of Christian morality, and many of the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, are common to all denominations of Christians. The following extracts from the Instructions of the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada, well express the views above stated. [See Journal of Education for July, 1850, page 112.]

*"Grammar Schools and Academies.*—In the past summer, the Grammar schools were on the whole, in a very efficient condition. Great difficulties attend the establishment of really useful Grammar and High Schools in this Province at present. Respectable schools of this kind cannot, in the present lack of desire for higher instruction, be established in many of the places where the law allows them; and on the other hand, the establishment of costly schools in the wealthier settlements or county towns excites the jealousy

of the poorer districts. In addition to this, these wealthier and more populous places are seldom disposed to support schools in proportion to their means, and consequently the experience of many of the County Academies has shown that a large sum of public money, even in a wealthy and populous place, does not always ensure the establishment of a good school. It rarely happens that the people can provide an assistant teacher, and in consequence the introduction of the higher branches and the elevation of the school to the rank of a grammar school, withdraws the attention of the teacher from the younger scholars, and the parents complain that, for the majority of the children, it is less serviceable than a common school.

*"Agricultural Chemistry* has been, for the first time, introduced into the schools in the past autumn, and it is therefore too soon, as yet, to speak of its results. In some districts, however, it is already in successful operation, and I have no doubt that it will in the present year be introduced into the majority of the grammar schools and many of the superior common schools.

*"Establishment of a Normal School.*—The example of Great Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, the United States, Canada, in short, of every country having an efficient education system, the resolutions passed by several public meetings in the past summer, the facts and views given in the earlier portion of the Report, and the manifest benefits which must result from the introduction of thoroughly trained teachers into the schools, should, I think, prevent much difference of opinion as to the utility of a Normal seminary in this Province. One Normal School will be sufficient for Nova Scotia. The State of New York and the Province of Upper Canada require but one; and one really good and well-supported institution of this kind is, on every account, preferable to several of an inferior description. It should be in a central part of the Province, and in a rural district, where board could be obtained cheaply and temptations to vice are few; and where a plot of ground for agricultural experiments, or for a model farm, could be obtained if desired. The facts already stated in reference to the Normal Seminaries of Massachusetts and New York, may give some idea of the probable expense of the institution. The Normal school of Upper Canada has two teachers, and is supported at an annual expense of £1,500. Its buildings cost £1,500. The Legislature of New Brunswick has paid for school premises at Frederickton £786 16s. 9d., and for furniture, library, &c. at Frederickton and St. John, £485. It pays annually to two teachers at Frederickton and St. John, £300, and to aid candidates attending the school about £500. The Normal School of Bridgewater, with a principal and two male assistants, costs about £575 per annum. Its building, which includes accommodation for a model school, cost £1,300."

#### EXTRACTS FROM LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS, 1850-51.

(Concluded from page 59.)

*Rev. Gilbert Miller, Athol:* "Every school section in Athol has a good school, except No. 4; and education is advancing. The present school Act works well, and gives much satisfaction to the people."

*Thos. McCall, Esq., Dunwich:* "In perusing your remarks on the free school system, I coincide with your opinion; but it is not likely that system will be universally adopted, unless by a legislative enactment."

*Rev. John Porteous, Beverly, County of Halton:* "Education has never engaged the attention of parents and guardians so much as it has done lately. Free schoolism has fallen upon their slumbers like a bomb—school section No. 4 and 5 has adopted the system. In fact, the work of conversion to free schools, goes gaily on; and next year, self defence will prompt sections, either to adopt nominal rate-bills, or fling them away entirely. I find mostly all the trustees in favour of free schools, and some who oppose them, do so on the ground, that, in the meantime, the school houses would not contain the children that would present themselves for instruction! Shame on such small spirits, who not only admit the efficiency of free schools, but oppose by a subterfuge their coming into operation."

*Robert Whitby, Esq., Marysburgh:* "It will be seen by my report, that not one-half of the children between the ages of 5 and 16 years, attend the schools; but it is to be hoped that a great change for the better will take place under the operation of the new school Act; indeed it has already taken place, and I am happy to say, that in this township the people are becoming alive to the