

public schools are the better prepared will be the pupils that we receive from them, and, consequently, the easier, pleasanter and more satisfactory will be our task in dealing with them afterwards.

In former days, when the amount of the High School grant depended largely on the average attendance, there was no doubt a temptation to relax the stringency of the entrance examination in order to swell the number of admitted candidates, but that day has long gone by, never to return; and under the regulations as they stand to-day and have stood for years average attendance is of practically no consequence in determining the government grant, and quality is of much more importance than numbers in admitting pupils to our schools. Moreover, we know that every pupil whom we admit before he is properly qualified imposes just so much additional work on the teachers to bring him up to the level of the class, and increases the risk of a low grading of the work by the High School Inspector at his next visit. I fail to see, then, how or why we have any interest in admitting pupils before they are properly prepared to pass the prescribed standards.

As to the other charge, that the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes representing, it is said, but 5 per cent. of the school population of the Province, receive the lion's share of the grant, and that the Public Schools, representing the other 95 per cent., are, in consequence, impoverished and rendered less efficient, I leave it to the Minister of Education to answer, as he has in fact so ably done in his speech of March 4th before the Legislature. Of course we take all we can get for our schools, and we may even have had the presumption to ask for more, but we have never asked that our grant should be increased at the expense of the Public Schools; and

that our requests have fallen on rather deaf ears is surely evident from the fact that while the number in attendance at our schools and the local expenditure for their maintenance increased by leaps and bounds, the grant per head declined from \$6.81 in 1882 to \$4.05 in 1896.

It is, therefore, not merely with no hostility to Public School teachers, but with the fullest sympathy with them in their work, their difficulties, and their discouragements that I have considered the question before us. In dealing with it I have assumed that it is a settled principle now of an educational policy that the non professional training of Public School teachers shall continue to be obtained mainly in the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, and that the two classes of schools will continue, therefore, to exercise a powerful influence on each other. The wiser the course prescribed for the High Schools and the more efficient the teaching in them the better prepared the Public School teachers will be for their work; and, in turn, the better qualified the latter are for their duties, and the more efficiently they discharge them, the better able shall we be to do good work in our schools.

Before dealing directly with the effects of some of the present regulations allow me for a little to take a wider range, and to point out what I consider to be some serious mistakes that have been made in the past by our educational authorities, mistakes which, in my opinion, go far to account for three unfortunate, but I fear unquestionable, facts; viz.:

(1) That there is less stability in the ranks of the Public School teachers to-day than there was a quarter of a century ago; i.e., that there are fewer teachers in them or preparing to enter them who are likely to remain in the profession and to make teaching a life work.