

been taxed to pay a teacher quite incompetent to instruct their own children. This is a wrong to the public, a wrong to the children, and wrong to individuals taxed to pay such a teacher. A free school is not intended to gratify individual meanness and avarice, but to secure the education of all the children of a neighbourhood; and no school should be made free (that is, supported altogether by a rate on property) which is not competent to teach all the youth of the neighbourhood desirous of being taught all the prescribed subjects of a common school education. But both the competent teacher and the school rate payer should be protected against injustice and incompetence by having a minimum of salary legally prescribed, which would keep competent teachers from leaving the profession, and below which, meanness on the part of any trustees could not descend. Whether this minimum of teachers' salaries should be prescribed by a County Board, or by the County Council, or by the Legislative Assembly, is also a matter for consideration. In the neighbouring States, one of the most serious hindrances to the efficiency of their schools—and the evil is deeply felt in Canada—is the relinquishing of the profession by the best teachers on account of remuneration so much less than they can obtain in other employments. Every competent teacher thus driven from the profession, is a serious loss to the common school education of youth who should be protected by law against such loss inflicted by ignorance and meanness. Thus protected, the teachers profession has as much permanence in several countries in Europe, and also in many cities and towns in the States, and in Canada, as any other profession; and Holland, some of the cantons of Switzerland, and other small and poor countries noticed in the former part of this report, show that where the minimum of the teachers' salaries is high, the schools are more efficient and the people are proportionably better and more generally educated.

6.—ADDITIONAL PROTECTION TO TEACHERS.

The frequent change of teachers has long been complained of as one of the most serious impediments to the progress of the schools in many instances, as well as to the continuance of good teachers in the profession. The fixing of a minimum salary of teachers, as above proposed, is one means of abating the nuisance of low graded and low priced teachers, and of keeping good teachers in the profession; but another means of scarcely less importance is to prevent the needless and injurious changes of teachers. It will have been seen that in all the educating countries of the continent of Europe, a teacher, when once employed, cannot be dismissed without the concurrence of the Inspector, and in some instances not without the concurrence of higher authority. In England, Ireland and Scotland, teachers are as secure in their places during good behaviour and efficiency, as if they held office under government. In Ontario, Trustees and people themselves, as well as pupils and teachers, should have better protection than now exists, against changes and derangement of school teaching and operations at every whim or instigation of individual avarice, prejudice or passion.