

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO FOR THE YEAR 1879 (printed by order of the Legislative Assembly). Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1881.

THE Report of the Minister of Education for 1879 lies before us, and as we look over its antiquated contents we have some difficulty in bringing our mind to the task of examining into matters many of which have been consigned to forgetfulness, and others rendered musty by lapse of time. We have year after year represented the utter worthlessness of much that appears in these annual documents of the Department, owing to their lack of freshness, and we know of no better plan to take away this reproach than by issuing, the Report, say, at the beginning of July, or, if the Legislature *must* see it first, let it still cover the first six months of the year, and then we shall have some approximate notion of our condition, educationally, when it sees the light of the Legislative chamber.

The total receipts for all Public School purposes for the year 1879 amounted to \$3,226,730, shewing a decrease of \$20,591 upon the receipts for the previous year. This is caused mainly by the great diminution in the receipts from Clergy Reserves and other sources, amounting to \$40,934. As there was a decrease in the same item in 1878 of \$35,702, we have the serious falling off from this source in two years of \$76,636. It would be interesting to learn if this is to continue, since, if it does, the amount levied by trustees must be proportionately increased. It is of some value to know that the total receipts for 1879 were about double those for 1867.

Of the receipts from assessment, \$1,433,153 were levied by trustees for the support of rural schools, and but \$874,071 by municipal assessment for schools in cities and towns. These figures indicate to what extent atten-

tion should be directed to the education of our rural population by the governing authorities, seeing that there is such a decided preponderance in the money contributed for their behoof. The total expenditure for all Public School purposes was \$2,833,084—a decrease of \$56,263. This amount includes \$2,072,822 for teachers' salaries—an increase of \$61,614; \$32,622 for maps, globes, prize books and libraries; \$306,025 for sites and buildings—a decrease of \$107,367; \$421,613 for rent and repairs of school-houses, collectors' fees, etc.

The total school population between the ages of 5 and 16 years as reported by trustees was 494,424. The total number of scholars attending school between the ages of 5 and 21, was 487,012; comprising 259,056 boys and 227,956 girls. The average daily attendance was 219,442. These numbers shew an increase of 2,064 in the school population, a decrease of 2,003 in registered attendance, and a decrease of 5,146 in average attendance. We have, therefore, brought before us the fact that while the school population is increasing, the attendance at school is decreasing. It may be said that little significance should be attached to this, owing to the smallness of the numbers that indicate it; but however trifling these may be, they shew a tendency in the wrong direction, particularly when we find the decrease in the average attendance the largest. The number reported as not attending any school during the year is 27,409, or between five and six per cent. of the whole school population. This number is made up of 15,361 from the counties, 6,363 from the cities, and 4,855 from the towns and villages. The general impression is that the cities contribute the largest proportion, though, as appears above, not the largest absolute number, to our uneducated classes. And this is correct, for while only four per cent. of our country