

cuts, and leave the rest to the administrator of the law."

The Trustees having failed to comply with the requirements of the Act and the regulations passed under its authority, the Inspector had no option but to withhold the municipal grant, and, on an appeal, he was sustained in so doing. The Trustees then called a public meeting, which ratified their action, and so the matter rests. In his successive memoranda on the question, the Minister of Education points out clearly that he has no option in the matter any more than the Trustees, and that the duties of both are clearly defined by the Act. To quote the words of the official reply to the Trustees' statement, "there may be grounds for altering the law, but while it stands, it is, of course, to be obeyed. To adopt any other course, or even to allow each Board of Trustees to interpret the Act to suit itself, would be to throw the working of the educational system into meretricious confusion."

Contributed.

Reading Text Books.

In response to the invitation under "Editor's Note" in November number, the following paper has been contributed by Mr. D. Macintyre, head master, Lancaster Public School —

(1.) Intelligence and expression are essential qualities of good reading. In order that they may read intelligently, the scope of the lesson should be within his comprehension. That he may read with expression the subject must be so entertaining as to awaken his sympathies. In short, the feelings, imagination and emotions of the child must be enticed into activity.

To make the scholar proficient in the art ought to be the main object of a school reading-book. To accomplish this purpose, the book must be suited to the student's capacity and tastes. An abundance of interesting and amusing narratives, stirring adventures fact and fable, well graduated, and written in a natural, graceful style, are therefore indispensable features of a good school reading-book, and this should be intermixed with lessons calculated to instruct and develop the moral and intellectual faculties, and a choice selection from the facts.

Our present authorized readers are deficient in the most important features. (1.) The material of which they are composed is very ill-judged. They aim at pouring in information rather than making the exercise attractive and forming a taste for good reading. Childhood cannot relish technical scientific extracts. (2.) On account of the want of sufficient graduation, the pupil is constantly laboring at the utmost stretch of his ability. In learning to read, he meets with the utmost insurmountable difficulties at every step, and consequently he has neither the power nor the inclination to cultivate a good style, and is forced to think that reading is nothing else than a dull, monotonous rehearsal of words.

Our third, fourth and fifth readers are not very unlike the far-famed gun that wanted a new stock, lock and barrel. Our first and second might be better graduated. May we not look to the educationalists of Ontario for the production of books at

least equal to those of the "Scottish School-book Association," got up by a committee of parish school teachers, or to some of our enterprising publishers, for text-books like Constable's or "the American Standard School Series," rather than resort to patching?

Mr. A. Stevenson, Markham, Ont., also contributes the following:—

The great desideratum in the present system of education for children seems to be the acquisition of the *sounds* of words regardless of their meanings. Now I hold this system to be entirely wrong. Of what benefit to a child are a host of words when he has not the slightest conception of their significations? This process of cramming children with words, not ideas, may be called what it will, but it is assuredly not education. This is the reason why children manifest so little interest in the matter of their reading lessons. And no wonder; it is nearly all Greek and Latin to them. No word in a lesson should be passed over until every child in the class fully comprehends its meaning. To expect the teacher to explain each word fully to them is unreasonable, and never to use words which the pupils do not understand would put a stop to all progress. However, it is not advisable to use new words in the reading matter of the First Reader, or to render my meaning more plain, to use words with which the child is not already familiar, both in sound and meaning. In the Second and Third Readers new words should be gradually introduced in the reading lessons. All of the difficult words which occur in each lesson should be arranged before or after that lesson in the order in which they come, and applicable definitions placed after them. These definitions should have reference to the words as used in that lesson only, and should be expressed in words suitable to the comprehension of the learner. Here let me call attention to the absurdity, in a practical light, of many of the definitions in the Third Reader. While professing to enlighten the rough and intricate paths of infant education, they serve only to envelop the youthful pilgrim in impenetrable fogs and darkness. The method above recommended is successfully adopted in the acquisition of foreign languages by all nations; and why should it not be adopted in the teaching what is to them a foreign language? The pupils in the Fourth and Fifth Readers should be required to use their dictionaries, carefully selecting those definitions which apply to the words in the particular connection in which they are used. The method recommended in the prefaces of our Readers of using the reading lessons as exercises for dictation is good, and the results which follow oral lessons in spelling do not justify the expenditure of so much valuable time as they entail. The reading matter of all the books is excellent, with the exception of some pieces in the First Reader, and perhaps such tales as "Red Riding Hood," "Silver-locks" and "Boots and Brothers." These contain neither the smallest particle of sense nor instruction. Fables such as "The Boys and the Frogs" are not included in this list, as they often impress useful truths and moral lessons indelibly upon the youthful mind. After all, the fault is perhaps as much in ourselves as in the Readers. We expect too much from the children, give them too long lessons, and get ruffled if the recitation is not perfect. Half a page thoroughly understood brings more good results than ten pages of crude, undigested matter.