

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

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REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION.

THE first part of the General Report, for 1870, of the Superintendent of Education has been published for the use of the members of the Local Parliament. The Superintendent states that the Educational Institutions of the Province continue to give evidence of progress, and that the interests of Education are receiving increased and increasing attention from the public generally.

THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

This important institution continues to occupy its position as the head of the public school system, not only with no diminution of usefulness but with additional efficiency. The School continues to be well filled each term with students undergoing training for the important profession of Common School Teachers. The necessity for a new and improved building for the use of the Normal and Model School is strongly urged. The suggestion of the Principal of the School that, instead of dividing the school year into two terms, there should be but one long term annually, meets with the unqualified approval of the Superintendent who recommends the change to the favorable consideration of the Council of Public Instruction. Such a change would tend to secure greater efficiency in the students; for the minimum of time for which each of them would be in training (one term) would, of course, be longer than at present. The trouble and expense of two journeys of students annually, to and from their homes, would be only half what it now is, as only one such double journey would be requisite. It is also believed that one long term and one long vacation would suit the convenience of both teachers and students better than the present arrangement; thus the change would, in every way, advance the public interests.

SPECIAL ACADEMIES.

The condition of the Special Academies is highly satisfactory, and their management commended. The Yarmouth Seminary is pointed out as meriting the highest eulogium.

COUNTY ACADEMIES.

The County Academies, as a whole, are represented by the Superintendent, as only partially doing the work for which they were designed. He further states that much remains to be done to place those establishments on a truly useful footing. The want of a superior High School for the city of Halifax is one which is keenly felt, and it is highly desirable that steps be taken, at the earliest possible day, to provide the requisite remedy.

COMMON SCHOOLS.

The increase during the year in the number of schools and in the number of the pupils attending them is not large. This was to have been expected. Whilst the new system was in process of extension, new school sections being established, new school-houses being erected, and the necessary organizations for putting them to use being perfected, the annual returns showed a rapid increase both in the number of schools and of pupils. Now that the provisions of the new system have been extended to nearly

every inhabited section of the country, and the system itself has assumed an aspect of permanency, we must expect the growth of our Common Schools to be little over the proportionate increase of the whole population of the Province.

The returns of the past year show, however, an increase for the winter term of fifty-four, and for the summer term of fifty-one schools. The number of pupils also exhibit an increase of 1566 and 714, for those respective terms. On the other hand, there has been an absolute diminution in the total number of days' attendance of all the pupils in the Province who have been attending school. The decrease in the days' attendance for the winter term amounted to no less than 278,455, and for the summer term to 3,719, compared with the corresponding term of the previous year. In juxtaposition with this fact, it must be mentioned that teachers are, without doubt, more efficient, and continually improving in efficiency. School-houses are more numerous, more commodious, and better fitted up, and many evidences are discernible that the main body of the people are more keenly alive to a sense of the importance of Education.

In harmony with the recommendation of but one long term in the Normal School, instead of two shorter terms, the Superintendent recommends that there be but one annual examination of candidates for license to teach in our Provincial schools. The Superintendent adds:

"I may here mention that, at the request of the Council of Public Instruction, I, last June, visited the Arichat Female Seminary, which is now classed as one of our Public Common Schools, and concerning which some complaints have been made. This Institution has now been in operation for about fourteen years, under the management of the Ladies of a Religious community. Since our new School Law came into operation, it has been converted into a Public Common School. I found that in the organization and direction of the School under the new regime, the requirements of the Law were, as far as practicable, complied with. It is to be remembered, that the pupils attending these Schools—there are two large schools designated as one Institution—are largely from the French population, and that a number of them do not speak the English language. The Teachers were duly licensed; the Schools were subject to the direction of properly appointed Trustees, upon the Board of which both the Catholic and Protestant element are now represented; the returns were sanctioned at the regular School meetings, and the School books prescribed by law were in use, and education in the English and French language imparted. I considered the Schools in a highly efficient condition, and saw no grounds of complaint against them.

"For further information on the present state of the female school at Arichat, I may add the following, from a communication made to this office by the Inspector of Richmond, dated the 14th inst., and replying to some enquiries relative to the Arichat school:

"I certainly assert that the School is conducted in accordance with Law, the Teachers are licensed and legally engaged by lawfully appointed Trustees, the School is a free Public School, and entirely under the control of Trustees who carry out the Law to the best of their ability."

"I am not aware of the existence either, of any irregularities in the School, or of any ground of complaint against it. On the contrary, I have been assured by both Teachers and Trustees, on whom I called after the reception of your letter, that there were no complaints whatever. I may add that the Trustees, one of whom belongs to the Church of England and is Secretary to the Board, have repeatedly expressed themselves satisfied with the School, and that there were no grounds for complaint."

TEACHERS.

The Superintendent observes that there are evidences of gradual improvement in the efficiency of the teachers, as a body. The returns show an increase in the number of teachers employed of 70 in the winter and of 33 in the summer term.