

The unprecedented commercial depression of the past year, combined with the general dulness in the agricultural and fishing industries, and the extreme financial stringency which naturally resulted from glutted markets, and the absence of public works in the Province—have all materially contributed to a partial, but it is to be hoped, only temporary paralysis of the local sinews of educational support.

The total sectional assessments for the payment of teachers' salaries for the school year, amounted to only \$4,100. Teachers were paid in addition \$7,024, through the Trustees from the County Funds, and \$11,057 from the Provincial Treasury, amounting in all to \$22,181.

By referring to the abstract of B. Returns it will be observed that Trustees' receipts amounted to several thousand dollars in addition to the above—a sum which appears to have been for the most part expended in the erection of new school-houses and also in the repair and enlargement of old ones.

The outlay in keeping in condition and providing a proper supply of Furniture and Apparatus has also been considerable. Trustees and rate-payers are gradually beginning to understand that imported desks and chairs, owing to superiority of material and finish prove in time to be actually *cheaper* than those of ordinary home manufacture. Great care and no inconsiderable cobbling are necessary to the bare existence, beyond the second lustrum of school furniture of the pine and spruce persuasion,—while the imported article is usually regarded as serviceable for a generation.

Black Board surface which is amply provided, and which I regard as an indispensable auxiliary agent in communicating instruction—is not so universally utilized as I would have desired. On some occasions when the teacher is required to make explanations to his class, on the wall—it is just then unfortunately discovered that there is no chalk in the school room. If pressed closely, the admission may come that there has been no chalk for weeks, months, or perhaps for the whole term.

In schools of an intermediate order, the black-board is used in teaching such special branches as Geometry and Algebra, but nothing else.

In schools marked "*superior*" in the "Inspection Notes" the agency of the wall is acknowledged and displayed in every exercise from the lisping child's first lesson in alphabetical symbols, to the heavy class recitation in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

In a large number of schools the supply of books is getting tattered and meagre—a fact not to be surprised at, when for the past year only forty-one orders for books were forwarded to the metropolis. Books bought in the local shops are not included in this number.

I am delighted to find that a new Series of school-books has been adopted by the Council of Public Instruction. Much taste and sound judgment have evidently been exercised in the compilation of a series distinguished for copious illustration and a happy choice of interesting reading matter. In this series, from the domains of literature, history and science have gems been culled which should collectively find a lasting place in our Provincial school system.

Campbell's smaller "History of Nova Scotia" is rapidly rising in the estimation of teachers and trustees. It has completely superseded the imperfect sketches of years gone by.

Income and Expenditure.—From all sources funds to the amount of \$18000 have passed into the hands of the Trustees, while the annual expenditure was a shade over \$17000—leaving a balance in hand of about \$1000 to meet claims against sections amounting collectively to over \$2000.