

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

Not Known When the Redistribution Bill Will be Ready.

NUMBER OF NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

Dr. Milne Moves to Obtain the Indian Reserves for the City. Mr. Keith's Motion Regarding Coal Mines Regulations Act.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 31.

The speaker took the chair at 2 p.m. The Rev. J. M. Douglas, M.P., moved that the Rev. J. M. Douglas, M.P., be appointed to the position of chaplain of the House.

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PROVINCIAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education.

ATTENDANCE AND COST OF SCHOOLS

An Interesting Report by Inspector Burns on the Condition of the Schools.

Hon. Col. Baker, minister of education, yesterday presented to the legislature the 22nd annual report of the public schools of the province to June 30th, 1893.

The records of the year show considerable increase in attendance, marked improvement in the condition of the schools, and satisfactory progress in the subjects of study prescribed.

The total number of pupils enrolled during the year was 68,411, an increase of 725 over that for the previous year, and the average actual daily attendance was 71,114, an increase of 884.30 for the same period.

On account of the length of the attendance year, the percentage of attendance for the year was 68.41, for the previous year, 67.82, and for the entire province, 61.85.

The expenditure for the year was \$1,747,847.33, an increase of \$174,847.33 over the previous year.

The cost of each pupil based on enrollment was \$16.57, and on average daily attendance, \$24.79.

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whether any advance at all has been made. Here it may be well to remark that it is better that progress should be made, even if it is slow, than that no progress should be made at all.

The schools have been generally well managed, perhaps better than in any former year. If occasional hardships still linger it is, I trust, soon to give place to modes that improve and elevate character.

It would be wrong to suppose that every teacher is a good disciplinarian, or that all are good in every other hand, commendable regularity and punctuality, ready compliance with the regulations, and well sustained interest in their work, are the qualities which are claimed as characteristics of our schools.

With respect to the various studies pursued, and to the progress therein, general remarks are submitted.

In this, my first year of inspection, I have endeavored to make myself acquainted with the difficulties under which they labor, and with the necessities of the country, rather than to suggest changes which, even if useful, the peculiar circumstances of a district might render it difficult to carry out successfully.

It is a recognized fact that although the essential principles of true education are unalterable, yet the mode of carrying them out must vary with the requirements of each country and province.

Being well acquainted with the systems adopted in England and in Ontario, and with the progress made in those places, it was but natural for me to compare in my mind the schools which I was visiting with those I had seen elsewhere.

It is not to be supposed that the progress made in this country is in any degree behind in the average attainments of the pupils of the public schools, or in the faithful work done in them by the teachers.

It would be absurd to expect that in a high and graded school of a few years' standing, all the appliances of a literary and scientific kind which have been collected in similar schools in England, founded hundreds of years ago, should be present in the same degree.

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The first high school established in the province was opened in Victoria in August, 1876. During that year it had an enrollment of 60 pupils. At the present time there are 118 pupils in attendance, under the charge of three teachers.

The second high school was opened in New Westminster in August, 1884. The whole number of pupils attending during the first year was 40. This school at the present writing is under the charge of two teachers, with 54 pupils on the registers.

In May, 1888, a high school was established in Nanaimo, but the school was in operation not quite two months prior to the summer vacation; the number of pupils enrolled during that period was only 12. The school during the present school year, 37 pupils were enrolled. The average attendance has not yet demanded the appointment of an assistant teacher.

A high school was opened in Vancouver in January, 1890, and during the first session 42 pupils were in attendance. At the present time this school is under the charge of five teachers, with 107 pupils on the registers.

It will thus be observed that there are 318 pupils attending these four highest public institutions of learning in the province.

Although authority has been vested for some years in the boards of trustees having control of these schools to exact fees from pupils attending them, yet up to the present time each school has been free to all who, having passed the required entrance examination, desire to take a course of instruction in the more advanced branches of study.

The high schools at present form the apex of our school system, and each year give evidence of satisfactory work. Of those whose judgment has any weight in forming public opinion, there are scarcely any who doubt the propriety and even necessity of providing from the public funds a course of education in elementary branches. There are a few, however, who object to the giving of a free instruction in the secondary or more advanced branches. Schools, like other institutions, should be judged by their results. It can certainly be shown that the educational interests of the province have been directly benefited by these higher institutions of learning. Each year pupils leave these schools to enter upon the active duties of life, and by the instruction received in them are better and more practically prepared for the calling of their choice, whether they follow agricultural, mechanical, mercantile or professional pursuits.

At each annual examination of candidates for certificates of qualification to teach, held since 1873, pupils from these schools have been successful. It is indeed creditable to our high schools that a considerable number of their pupils have attained the highest grade in the first-class certificates, and that so many have succeeded in the next grades.

Of the 275 teachers now employed in the schools over 100 have received instruction in these schools. Hence the usefulness of these secondary institutions of learning must be apparent. The past history of our high schools shows that they have been of incalculable benefit to the province.

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