

for securing attendance. The absence of a compulsory attendance clause is, perhaps, the principal defect in the school law of New Brunswick to-day.

The report of the Chief Superintendent shows that a very large number of children do not enter a school from one end of the year to the other. The number of children of school age—five to fifteen—in the Province is over 80,000; the number of names registered as in attendance at school is about 50,000. But the *irregularity* of the attendance of those who are registered is even more striking. Out of 50,000 registered as in attendance, the average actual attendance is only about 28,000. It is not possible to write these figures with any degree of satisfaction for, as the Chief Superintendent says, they show that out of 80,000 children of school age about 50,000 are out of school daily. This startlingly unsatisfactory condition might perhaps be partially explained on the ground of the difficulties of attendance in some parts of the country during the winter, the distance being so great. But even this explanation fails us and makes the matter worse, for in this city not more than one-half the children of school age

are registered as in attendance. This means, of course, the practical failure of the free school system. Besides, there is a practical injustice in taxing the people to secure a public benefit, unless means be at the same time taken to secure that benefit for the community which pays for it. It seems eminently wise that men should contribute to provide facilities for education whether they personally have children to be educated or not. It seems the discharge of a proper obligation by the State, and it is to the advantage of every one that his fellow-citizens have some measure of intelligence; but it is manifestly the right of those who do contribute under these circumstances to have secured to them the possession and enjoyment of these advantages. It is not fair that men should be required to provide a safeguard against the prevalence of ignorance and consequent vice, and at the same time be left to suffer from the presence of these evils, for the prevention or removal of which they are required to pay. Attention is being drawn to this, however, and it is probable that before long steps will be taken to provide a remedy.

G. B.

ST. JOHN, Oct., 1885.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A REPLY TO "X." IN MONTHLY FOR NOVEMBER.

To the Editor of THE MONTHLY:

SIR,—I am tempted to venture an answer to "X." I am not sure if my reply will be satisfactory to your correspondent, it is barely so to myself. The ways of the Department are, alas! dark ways, and I am afraid they are likely to remain so, as long as the portfolio of education is in the hands of a politician.

Your correspondent is, no doubt,

aware that the Legislature vote annually a sum of money, somewhat in excess of eighty thousand dollars, toward the support of High Schools. This money is supposed to be distributed amongst the High Schools according to a basis approved of by the Governor-in-Council, which means simply that it is apportioned according to the sovereign and arbitrary will of the autocrat of our Bureau of Education. This "basis" has been during the past years—indeed, ever since the sacred trust of education was