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The time is now approaching when the subject of common school education must again be brought before the legislature. Next session should give the province a new law, and who can measure the influence which that law may exercise for good or evil on the destinies of the country, and on the individual welfare of every parent and child. There has been too much indifference to the importance of this subject. The people do not need to be told that our present plan is defective in its support, in its methods of instruction and its local management. This is felt in nearly every settlement in the province. It is only necessary that every person should question himself as to his personal interest in a greater diffusion of humanising and elevating training, and should act accordingly, to bring to bear on the legislature a force of public opinion which would sweep away all the hesitation of wavering representatives, who fear to benefit the country less than to punish them for it. To aid in exciting a well directed and vigorous effort in the approaching crisis, we shall, even at the risk of wearisome repetition, again direct attention to some of the principal objects to be contended for.

First. We must have public instruction for all—no class distinctions—no party distinctions—no denominational distinctions, but a broad educational platform based on our common civilisation and christianity. On this ground alone can sound popular education stand and flourish in small and divided communities. We sympathise with the few honest voices that ask for some more direct and extensive recognition of religion than is consistent with leaving the matter of christian instruction solely at the discretion of the parent; though we believe them to be mistaken not only on the ground of public expediency but on the higher one of christian love and duty. But if there be any political partisans ready to hazard the education of the poor man's children for the infinitely little gain of a little political capital, we trust all good men will despise and abhor them.

Secondly. We must have a good and well supported Normal Seminary, to send well qualified teachers over the length and breadth of the Province, until every school shall be taught by a person trained

in the best methods of conducting the work of education. After a few years such an institution will double the value of the public and private money expended on the schools, shorten the time necessary to obtain a useful education, and send forth a much more highly educated race of young people from the schools. There are very few persons not convinced of the utility of a Normal School; and it is to be hoped that its efficiency will not be cramped by too narrow views of economy.

Thirdly. Free schools supported at least in part by assessment must be secured before we can hope to have a general diffusion of the blessings of education. This of all educational improvements is the most opposed—yet it must come. The example of other colonies and the interests of the mass of the poorer population must enforce the acknowledgment of the right of all children to a common school education paid for from the public purse. The principle on which this is demanded, and its probable influence on public interests, are now familiar to every intelligent man all over the province—let them set themselves to combat the prejudices of the ignorant, and to outweigh the influence of the selfish. Let it be thoroughly understood that the intention is not to withdraw the public grant, but to add to it a sum collected from property all over the province, and employ the united sums in placing a school within the reach of every parent, for just so much in addition as he may choose to give; and that the choice of teachers by the people or their representatives the trustees, and the independent management of the affairs of every district by its own people, will in no respect be interfered with, but on the contrary greatly extended, while the facilities for having good teachers and sending all the children to school will be vastly increased.

Fourthly.—Efficient annual inspection of every school by local inspectors, acting under a general head, must be provided for. This is an important check and stimulus, and can, on the plan proposed in the school bill of last winter, be secured at small cost. As it is explained in another part of this number, no further remark is necessary here.

Fifthly.—Arrangements for the regular and orderly election and performance of the

duties of trustees. Under all previous laws this has been much neglected; and to this cause we must attribute much of the inefficiency of the schools. The trustees elected by the people have a large share of substantial power. This is the liberal and popular element in our school system, and unless actively worked out to its true results, no exertions of officers appointed by government can infuse sufficient energy into the schools.

These are the great objects which we have all along thought should be aimed at in a new law, and we beg leave now most urgently to press on the friends of popular education the importance of informing the public mind and petitioning the legislature. To facilitate the latter object, and at the request of many friends of education, we shall prepare and circulate forms of petition along with the present number of the Journal, and we respectfully request those who may receive them to do all that is possible to have them presented to the legislature, respectfully signed. Persons who do not receive copies, and who are desirous of aiding in the work of obtaining signatures, may have them by applying to the Superintendent of Education.

FREE SCHOLARS.

Inquiries are frequently made as to the number of free scholars allowed by law, and the terms of their admission. On this subject the law is sufficiently explicit, and Trustees should be in no doubt as to the nature of their duties. The children of persons known to be unable to provide for their education have a right to admission, and should apply for it. The Trustees cannot refuse them unless eight free scholars are already on the list. On the other hand it is an absolute fraud to make up the number of free scholars by admitting children whose parents are able to pay. In many districts the benevolence of teachers and trustees admits more than the required number of free scholars. In other cases, however, there is reason to fear that there is a sort of combination of the teacher and wealthier parents to exclude the children of the poor. Where good evidence of this can be obtained, it affords ground for withholding the public money from such schools. It is to be hoped that all the difficulties attending the present distinction between paid and free scholars will soon be removed by the establishment of Free Schools.