

not satisfied in many cases with less than such, although they may, at times, have to put up with teachers of inferior grades and fair ability, or of superior grades and mediocre capacity. These manifestations and exertions to raise the standard of education in our midst, are cheerful and encouraging for the future progress of the schools in this County, where so much yet remains to be done; for, though these leading features are well delineated and traceable, still the condition of our schools generally is not what it ought to be. In justice to our people, it must be admitted here, however, that considering the very general and serious financial embarrassment incident upon the almost total prostration of trade and commerce for the last four or five years, entailing the nearly complete ruin of our shipping interest, upon which our prosperity so much depends, they have accomplished, perhaps with few exceptions, as much during this dull and trying period as could be reasonably expected. With the return of prosperity, with the revival of the coal trade particularly—for as long as that industry will remain in its present state of depression, the people of Cape Breton as a whole *cannot* be prosperous—we may look forward with most sanguine hopes for the advancement of education in this part of the Province. With the present disposition of the people towards the acquisition of knowledge, if prosperity should once more bless the land, it is conclusively evident that we would eagerly seize the advantage it would give to secure the very many and paramount benefits conferred by education.

*Sections.*—One more section has been formed this year by the division of L'Ardoise, No. 28, which has been named and numbered West L'Ardoise, No. 67, making 67 Sections in all in the County. This division was an urgent desideratum. L'Ardoise, No. 28, was large in extent and populous, and, although there were children of school age enough for a graded school with three departments, it was clear that, judging from the past disposition of the rate-payers, the required accommodations would not have been provided for sometime to come, contented as they were with a building barely sufficient to seat 60 pupils, when there were nearly 150 in the Section. Now, I anticipate the best results will follow from the division when the western Section gets in full operation—a larger and more regular attendance, and more satisfactory and steady progress.

There were 13 Sections having no school during the Winter Term, 9 in the Summer, and 6 during the year. Of these, Lochside, No. 7; Grand Grave, No. 62; Fourche, No. 33, and Beard Island, No. 64, have no school-houses. Lochside has had no school for the last two years. The trustees previous to that time had all along the use of a school-house erected a good many years ago by a private gentleman, the heirs of whom are not disposed now to give the use of their building any longer to the Section, and the rate-payers being few in number, and not wealthy, have refused to tax themselves to build one of their own. Grand Grave commenced the erection of a building a few years ago, but before it was completed it was destroyed by fire, and no attempt has been made to rebuild since. The rate-payers—at least some of them—have, however, continued to send their children to school to St. Peter's Island, the adjoining Section. Fourche has not yet seen it's way clear to replace the building maliciously burned down last October twelve month; and Bear Island has been unable to finish the school-house commenced in 1876, on account of the almost complete failure of the boat fishery around that shore, upon which all the rate-payers depend for a livelihood.

*School-houses.*—South Mountain, Cape LaRonde, and Black River have erected very suitable buildings during the year, and sufficiently pushed the work towards completion to have school in them—the two first deserving special mention for their solidity of construction, size and neatness. Petit Degat has thoroughly renewed and somewhat enlarged the old school-house, so