

ter of scholars sent to school, so that it will be the interest of the teacher to take all the scholars he can get, and no parent or other person can be obliged to pay any more to the support of the school except his share of what the meeting of the people of the Section may agree to raise either by subscription or assessment.

The intention is to abolish *frees* or *subscription per scholar*, and when a person has paid his share of the county tax, to give his children admission to the school without any other payment, except what he may choose to subscribe to aid in raising the teacher's salary, or what he and his neighbors may think proper to assess themselves.

The whole system is contrived for the following purposes: (1) to make it easy to get up a good School in each section; (2) to admit every child both to the common and grammar schools on the easiest possible terms, and to make it be to the advantage of individuals and districts to keep as many children at school as possible. (3) To bring the wealth of the Province to the aid of those who have children to educate and little means to do it.

Some persons have endeavoured to propagate the opinion that the Provincial aid will be withdrawn, and the counties taxed to an excessively large amount. On the contrary the Provincial aid must be continued in order to give any chance of success to the system, and no county can be taxed to a greater amount than that of the Provincial aid it actually receives, which is very much less than the sum which a portion of the parents in the several counties now raise for the support of the schools.

The means recommended for these purposes are not new and untried. They have been in operation for 200 years in New England; and in almost precisely the form proposed here, are now educating the people of the great and rapidly advancing Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

### Free Schools and Attendance.

Misconceptions appear to prevail among well informed persons as to the true connection of Assessment and Free Schools with school attendance. It is often supposed that even with Free Schools supported by assessment it would be difficult to secure a full attendance of children, and Free Schools supported by assessment are thus confounded with what may be called pauper Free Schools and free scholarships, and with the support of schools by rate-bill or fee per head. Experience has fully proved that free scholar are irregular in attendance and that schools supported for free instruction, by charitable contribution or State funds, are poorly attended. The results of Free Schools supported by assessment on property are the very contrary. Experience in New England, Canada, and such districts in this Province as have assessed themselves, show, that when

all have to pay in proportion to means whether they send pupils or not, and when after paying all can send pupils without further charge, the largest possible attendance is always secured; simply because the stimuli of pecuniary loss on the one hand and cheap instruction on the other are constantly at work to ensure it. This should be steadily kept in view and constantly urged by the friends of Free Schools, as it is the principal fact on which the utility of the system rests.

### Thoughts for Teachers.

It is now the middle of the winter half year of the schools. The older children are at school. Many of them perhaps may not enjoy another winter's schooling. Since the commencement of the half year the teacher and his pupils have had time to know and understand each other. It is a good time to think of the work and its probable results.

What progress has been made. We do not mean how much book has been got through, but how much has been learned since the beginning of the half-year? Is it such as to warrant a hope that the pupils will all have made large advances in the spring? If not now is a good time to enquire what better means can be employed. Is the progress in one department good, in another indifferent? Think of the means by which this weak point may be strengthened. Are some scholars far behind the rest, and have you almost ceased to try to keep them up? You now know their peculiar talents and dispositions better than at the beginning of the term. Think of what they most need, and make another trial with them.

Is all the work of the school thoroughly understood, or are there reasons to suspect that some individuals or classes are blundering on through grammar, arithmetic, or geography, without knowing much of what it means? If the latter, the evil should be remedied at once, if you would not stupidity rather than instruct. Let vigorous efforts be made to interest and excite healthy mental activity, and make sure that everything taught is within the reach of the faculties of the learner, and that these faculties are being stretched out to attain it.

Perhaps some of the scholars have entered the school with habits of incorrect pronunciation, or of using ungrammatical or vulgar language, or with idle, mischievous, or immoral habits; and perhaps instead of being cured of these they have succeeded in teaching you to become accustomed to them, so that now you do not observe them at all, or are content to pass them over unnoticed. If anything of this kind exists in the school, remember that while uncorrected it is a corrupting influence, and make another effort to counteract it. Perhaps now that you have more influence over the mind of the pupil, you may be more successful than formerly.

Many similar subjects of reflection may

occur to teachers. By thinking and acting on them, much may be done to make the schools of this winter so useful that the scholars may in after life look back on them as the most useful time they have ever spent.

### Slate Lessons.

In the examination of Mr. Jack's department in Pictou Academy, a short time since, we observed a lesson in geography of a character new to us. The pupils were called out with their slates, names of places were given out and they were requested to write an account of each, and afterwards to point it out on the Map. This must be an agreeable and interesting mode of teaching Geography, and excellent for a review of subjects previously studied. The use of the slate for class lessons is becoming much more general than formerly, and has the advantage of enabling much work to be done in a short time, and of testing the progress of the scholars in spelling, writing, composition, and rapidity and accuracy of thought.— Like all other good methods however, it may be carried too far, and it is liable to the disadvantages that pupils of good memories may copy from books which they scarcely understand, and that habits of careless writing may be acquired. Where such results are observed, the practice should be discontinued for a time, or employed only at intervals. As an occasional exercise however in spelling, grammar, composition and geography, practice in classes with the slate, accompanied with careful questioning, can scarcely be too strongly recommended.

### Free Schools in Musquodoboit.

The people of this district have long been in advance of those of most others in the province on the subject of Free Schools and assessment. The following extract from a private letter, gives a most encouraging view of the results of assessment, even under the imperfect facilities afforded by the present law:

"Two of the Schools have adopted the principle of assessment, viz: Musquodoboit Harbor, and No. 10, the district in which I reside. They are both likely to work well. In the former, the average attendance has doubled; and in the latter, nearly trebled. What it would be I cannot say if the house was large enough, but the school is full and many have been refused admittance. The district pays the teacher £50 a year, and assesses for £50; the present average is 60."

### Forms of Petition.

Teachers who have received these forms will understand that they are under no obligation to circulate them, unless they consider it expedient to do so. They are however requested to hand them to their trustees, or other persons likely to take an interest in the matter. In cases where signatures cannot be obtained, it is correct