

and in Canada, have obtained a very large additional amount of useful facts. I may remark, however, that an additional value is given to such imperfect observations as those which I have been enabled to record, by the circumstance that the American schools present an eclectic system, whose materials have been gathered from the best schools of Great Britain and the Continent; and having been found adapted to the circumstances of the New World, have been built upon the wide foundation which was laid by the old colonists of New England. This gives to the American schools a variety and completeness, which render them much more worthy of study than they might otherwise have been. I must express my obligations to the educational officers and teachers of the places which I visited, for the readiness with which they placed within my reach all the facilities that I could desire, for obtaining information respecting their educational institutions. I found every where, that to mention the object of my mission was at once to obtain their hearty aid and sympathy. I must also thank the educational officers of Upper Canada and New Brunswick for their kindness in furnishing me with the reports relating to the schools in those Provinces.

"Public Meetings and Lectures.—To carry out the provision of the law in relation to public meetings, I determined, before the close of the year, to hold one meeting in each District in the Province. An experiment so novel as that of assembling the people together to consider a subject, in the opinion of many so common-place and unimportant, must of necessity meet with many difficulties. In some districts, accordingly, with all the exertions that I could use, the attendance and appearance of interest were very small. In other cases, the results were very encouraging and satisfactory.

"Inspection of Schools.—To this department of the work of superintendence I attach great importance, as the means of checking inaccurate returns, arranging disputes, and stimulating teachers, parents and pupils.

"Supply of Books and Apparatus.—In expending the sum of £600 appropriated to this object, I have endeavoured to supply the great destitution of books existing in the poorer schools, and among the poorer scholars in most schools; to prepare the way for uniformity of school books, and to introduce new and improved books and improved apparatus in room of those that are less serviceable, or in the case of apparatus, where none was previously in use. In any one of these directions there is room for the expenditure of a much larger sum.

"Associations and Institutes.—Teachers' Associations are societies of teachers residing near to each other, meeting at stated times for discussion of educational subjects, and mutual consultation and encouragement, and for the visitation of each other's schools, and subsequent discussion of their management. In my tour through the Province, I found but one such association in existence.

"Teachers' Institutes are collections of teachers from greater distances than in the case of Associations, for the purpose of holding a meeting of the duration of a week or more. They are, in short, temporary Normal Schools. In many parts of the United States they are held annually, and are aided by legislative grants. The objects are discussion, illustration of methods, instructions and lectures in school branches and the art of teaching.

"School Trustees.—Deficiency in the performance of the duties of these officers is one of the principal defects in the working of our present system. I have every where endeavoured to direct public attention to this subject, and I hope with some degree of success. The adoption of the system of compulsory assessment would at once give new importance to the office of trustee, and remove the causes which now render it inefficient.

"Teachers.—The real efficiency of any system of public education, and with this the prosperity of all those great interests which can rest safely only on the intelligence and good moral habits of the people, must depend mainly on the teachers. In this Province, however, the teacher's office is altogether underrated, both in public estimation and public support. If it be desired to elevate the profession of the teacher to its true position, it must be made a comfortable livelihood for competent men who engage in it, and means provided for training young persons to enter on the work with a full knowledge of its duties, and for giving additional skill to those already employed. The following statistics, taken from the results of my inspection, answers to questions, and the returns, give some idea of the present condition of the profession of teaching. The teachers of 222 schools, visited by me in the various parts of the

Province, may be rudely classed under the following heads: 1, Middle-aged or old teachers, experienced, and of fair or high qualifications, 34; 2, Young teachers, with fair or good education, and improving in their profession, 74; 3, Young teachers, with moderate or poor education, and small qualifications for the work, 62; 4, Middle-aged or old teachers, scarcely or not at all competent, 52; total 222. Of 165 teachers who have answered my questions—80 were educated in this Province, 56 were educated in Great Britain or Ireland, 10 were educated in other Colonies and the United States, 19 gave no answer to this question, 33 have taught in Britain or other countries, 67 are willing to attend a Normal School, 66 are willing to attend Institutes, 48 are paid in money, 26 half in money, 39 use the blackboard in teaching, 43 board from house to house, 14 are under 20 years of age, the youngest 17, 50 are under 30, 42 are under 50; 25 are 50 years of age or over, the oldest being 70; 34 do not mention their ages; 66 are married, and 6 are widows or widowers; 102 use corporeal punishment,—most of them rarely. Of about 1000 teachers in the Province, 700 are males and 300 females. Their average salary from the people is £24 15s. 3d., and from the Provincial grant £11 11s. 10½d. The greater number of the teachers who have informed me that they were educated in the Province, have attended the country schools and academies. Comparatively few have received education at the colleges or in the metropolis. Of those educated in Great Britain, 27 are from Scotland—14 from England; 15 have been educated in Ireland. Of those educated in other colonies, the greater part are from New Brunswick, some having been trained in the Normal School of that Province. The limited use of the blackboard, and the statements made in the answers respecting exercises, books, &c., indicate a great deficiency of professional knowledge. On the other hand, the large number of those who express desire to attend a Normal School shows much anxiety to improve.

"Support of Schools.—The methods of support now in use are very defective. The only effectual remedy for the present difficulties in the support of schools, is the introduction of *general and compulsory assessment*. It is well known that several of our ablest politicians and literary men have, at various times, publicly and earnestly advocated the support of schools by assessment; and though their views have produced little immediate action, they have now penetrated the minds of nearly all the active friends of education in the Province, and are being rapidly diffused among the masses of the people. The principal opponents of assessment are the wealthy, who have educated their children, or have no families, or who fear that their portion of the burden would be heavy; and the less informed of the poor, who dread taxation, and liability to be called on for money payments. Both classes of objectors labour under misapprehensions of the true nature and working of the system. No persons profit more extensively by that general diffusion of good education, which results from a system of assessment, than men of wealth. The resulting intelligence, order and prosperity—diminution of vice and pauperism, and growth and permanence of good laws and institutions—all tend to enhance the security and value of property. On the other hand, no mode of supporting education falls so lightly on the poor man, or gives him so great facilities for raising his children to respectable positions in society.

"Attendance.—With the irregular attendance which prevails in our country schools, no teacher can have an orderly or systematic school, properly organized classes, or steady progress. The heat teacher must ultimately succumb, and the brightest pupils be retarded, by such a difficulty. On looking over a school register, I have often seen many such lines as the following:

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opposite the names of pupils. In such a case it is quite evident that the child can have learned little, except to think himself a dunce, and to dislike going to school. Much of this irregularity arises from the real or supposed necessity of keeping children at home, to aid their parents at the busy seasons of the year. I have no doubt, however, from the inquiries which I have made, that much of this might be avoided by proper management. Where it can be avoided, parents may rest assured, that it is one of those cases of withholding more than is meet, that "tend only to poverty." The man who wilfully and unnecessarily keeps his children at home, defrauding them of the time which God has given them for the growth of the mind as well as of the body, and who makes little slaves of them for the pitiful gain of their feeble labor,