

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF ONTARIO for the years 1880 and 1881. Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly, by C. Blackett Robinson, Toronto.

It has been our duty year after year to complain of the antiquated contents of the Minister's Report when we had occasion to review it. The bulky volume of some 400 pages lying before us will save us from that duty in the present instance, for, as far as the nature of its contents will allow, it is a Report for the year 1881 as well as for that of 1880; in fact it contains matter of so recent a date as January of the present year. Let no one ever now doubt the truth of the proverb: "Constant dropping wears away the stone." It is true that part of the contents are in a somewhat chaotic state, but this can be easily remedied in future years. The great point has been gained in getting statistics so recent that the interest in them is still fresh, while the results they show are of practical value. But Mr. Crooks's merit does not rest here; he has manifested a laudable desire to increase the value of the blue-book by inserting material of considerable value which has never appeared in any previous Report. Some of this material we may notice in the course of our remarks.

The total receipts for all school purposes in 1880 amounted to \$3,254,829, showing an increase of over \$28,000 upon the receipts of the previous year. Of this amount the Government contributes 8 per cent. in the shape of a legislative grant; 21 per cent. is derived from the Clergy Reserves and other sources; while the remaining 71 per cent. comes directly out of the pockets of the people. As we should expect, the rural sections contribute by far the largest portion of the amount, their assessment for school purposes in 1880 amounting to 62 per cent. of

the whole sum collected. This fact is sufficient to show the necessity for increased attention to the training of the children in our rural schools.

The total expenditure for all school purposes in 1880 was \$2,822,052, being a decrease of \$11,031. The cause of this decrease, which was much larger in 1879, is due to the diminished number of school-houses erected. A few years ago it became the disagreeable duty of Inspectors to insist upon more and better school accommodation. This led to the building of a large number of additional school-houses, and the replacing of many dilapidated buildings by those of a better class. The report gives the cost of education per pupil as \$5.85. We suppose this is one of the improved features Mr. Crooks intends to introduce into the official blue-book; but he is a little astray in his method of computation. We have ourselves, in past years, furnished our readers with this item, but we calculated it upon the average attendance, which is the only legitimate mode of computation, and the one adopted in the English Education Report. Mr. Crooks takes a different plan; he estimates the cost upon the registered attendance: hence a child who has attended but a week is put down as costing for this week's education as much as the one who was present in school the whole year. While, therefore, the cost per pupil was \$5.85 upon the registered attendance, it mounts up to \$12.88 reckoned, as it should be, upon the average attendance. The cost in counties was \$13.14, in cities \$12.15, and in towns \$11.20 per pupil.

It may surprise our readers to find that counties pay most for the education of the school children, seeing that the salaries, which are the main item of expense, are so much less in the counties, but the fact is easily accounted for by the smaller average