

secured in the class of teachers permitted to take charge of them, a completeness of instruction in the elementary branches designed to be taught there; that they know to a positive certainty these things, not have a vague and misty vision of them; that they should have a knowledge by observation, of the most approved method of conveying instruction to pupils, and, above all, that they be alive, and have a heart for their work. Nothing is more trying to the nerves than to see a teacher going through a routine with the spirit of a martyr, like a soldier marching backward and forward on sentry, where no enemy ever appeared, or is even expected to appear. It makes school visitors feel much as the farmer feels who has placed a lazy man in his corn field, who is ever and anon looking at the sun, praying that Phœbus may hurry on, though he is by no means in a hurry. Our system of examinations, and the granting of diplomas, is calculated to meet one want here designated. It has done excellent service.

The influence of conventions, like this and of normal and superior schools must be relied upon to supply another want, the infusing of a spirit of life and intelligence into this large body of educators. They are the educators of the many, and they need to magnify their calling. To the elevation and perfection of our common schools must we look for the awakening of a proper interest in, and appreciation of the value of education. The higher schools and colleges will not thrive unless the common schools prosper. If the latter are doing their work well, we shall find many by their own energies pushing on higher. These, too, are the very best material with which to make strong men intellectual powers in society. I do not agree with those who would discourage young men or women from teaching while preparing themselves for higher or other stations, merely because they may not remain teachers for life. It is said that it is only used as a stepping-stone and a convenience. It may be so, in some cases, but, as a rule, you will find the brightest minds are those who are making this a means of helping themselves on to higher attainments. They are burning with a love for knowledge, and with such, the work of conveying instruction is generally a pleasure, because it is a stimulant to study in themselves. There is another truth, persons who acquire knowledge are not generally like persons acquiring property. Imparting, rather than hoarding knowledge, affords pleasure. Besides, young persons bring to their work the freshness and ardour of youth, which finds a sympathetic cord in the hearts of children around them. Another reason why I would encourage such teachers, is, that it helps on the work. It affords facilities in an honorable and useful calling for indigent youth to climb the hill of science.

To render our Common Schools what they ought to be, they should be free from all partial, local or sectarian influences. These schools, unlike the superior schools, are sustained by the property of the country almost without exception.

The only exception is that of scholar fees which fall upon persons in proportion to the number of their children. This is not always in the same ratio as the possession of property. This provision in the law seems to be in the interest of bachelors. The fact that the whole community sustain common schools under the law, shows that the object is one in which all are supposed to be agreed.

In a country like ours, where the people are divided by the double partition of creed and language, this becomes a most important and delicate duty of the system to manage.

I do not consider that the teaching of personal religion has any place in the common schools. Religious instruction, as such, must be provided elsewhere. Nothing will sooner bring Common Schools into contempt, than local favoritism, the government of neighborhood cliques or proselytism.

Teachers should be sought for their fitness, because the school wants them, not because they want the school.

While this is true, our schools should be christian, not pagan schools. The principles of christian morality should be inculcated. Our dissentient school law is a safety-valve to prevent the evil of sectarian schools becoming aggravated. It is however beneficial mainly as provisions in a contract and which are termed comminatory—threatening. This is right, like many other precious rights, that is all the more valuable for being rarely exercised.

No rules can be laid down to guide teachers in the discharge of their delicate duties, they must rely upon that forbearance and mutual confidence, which a larger acquaintance always engenders, with men of different races and creeds. Much of the dread of other's ideas is due to prejudice. This removed, we find ourselves wonderfully harmonizing upon matters where we supposed there was a world-wide difference.

These annual Conventions should do a world of good in enlarging the minds of teachers; in generating a liberal spirit and in removing prejudices by the supplanting of suspicion by confidence; and the cold salutation of the stranger for the cordial grasp of the friend.

In closing my responses to what is expected of our Common

Schools, I venture to remark that the principles of our civil polity should be taught in them—What are we, a monarchy or a republic? Are we under a despotic government? What is a limited monarchy?

The leading maxims and principles of our constitution should be taught, particularly those duties devolving upon jurors, and witnesses in courts of law. More than all, in importance, the nature and general features of our Municipal law should be taught. A hand book might be prepared, which, if used as a reading book, with occasional lessons and questions, would familiarize pupils with certain general principles of great use. An elementary education in this science is much needed. It tends to make a homogenous people—to generate national pride, and particularly it gives an introduction to society, so that when civil responsibilities are thrown upon a young man he may have some idea of where he is, what to do, and where to get information.

With Common Schools well sustained, well and faithfully managed, a generation of intelligence will grow up, our people will have a good comprehension of their privileges and appreciation of their wants. They will become better informed of the general progress of the world. They will improve in all the industrial arts. They will have more wants, higher tastes to gratify, but will have great facilities for supplying these new wants. They will enjoy more and have a higher order of enjoyment. Ignorance with the masses makes the literary atmosphere of a country cold and cheerless. Literary efforts of every kind find very little sympathetic response. It may do for a rude people in a semi-barbarous age to have an ignorant peasantry. It may contribute to mystery and poetry, but for a progressive, matter-of-fact, utilitarian epoch like this, we must have educated yeomanry. Our Common Schools are the agency by which this want must be supplied.

## 2. COMMON SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO.

The Report for 1867 of the Chief Superintendent of Education for Ontario, on the Common and Grammar Schools of the Province, has just been issued. The statistics given are very satisfactory. They show that external progress is still the rule, and that an ever increasing proportion of the young of the country are enjoying the advantages connected with our Common School system. No doubt very much remains to be done; but in aiming at a higher state of efficiency in our educational institutions, we are not to overlook the progress which has already been made, and the favourable contrast, in many respects, to be drawn between what is now and what was the state of things not very many years ago.

The Legislative grant for 1867 amounted to \$172,542, an increase of \$3,051 on the previous year. To secure this, as is well known, the municipalities must raise, by local assessment, at least an equal sum. Instead of being content merely to meet the conditions of the grant, they raised \$351,873, an increase of \$32,719, and an excess by voluntary gift over what was required by law of \$179,331.

This was altogether apart from the rates by Trustees on particular sections. The rate thus imposed produced \$799,708, or \$39,342 above that of 1866; so that the amount of voluntary self-imposed tax for educational purposes has, for the past year, been \$1,483,182, an increase of \$58,717.

In addition to this there has been, in certain sections, a rate bill imposed on each pupil. This yielded \$51,197, or a decrease of \$2,284, showing that the plan of Free Schools meets with increased favour. Nor is this all which has been devoted to Common School purposes. From the Clergy Reserve, and other available funds, \$280,401 have been added to the others. The total amount, then, raised for Common School purposes, not counting unexhausted balances and the legislative grant, \$1,670,335, an increase of \$62,364—with one exception, the largest increase of any one year since the system was placed on its present footing.

When from income we pass to expenditure, we find that \$1,093,516 were paid for teachers' salaries; \$31,354 for maps, etc.: for sites and building school houses, \$149,195. In short, on every item of expenditure there was a large increase.

According to the best estimate which can be formed, the school population, viz: that between 5 and 16 years of age, is at present 447,726. Of these there were at school for a longer or shorter time during 1867, 380,511, and of other ages 21,132. The increase in the number of pupils was 10,748. The total number of children returned as not attending school is 39,516. These numbers, we may remark, are only to be taken as approximations.

There were open during the year 4,422 schools, and 4,890 teachers were employed. Of these 2,849 were gentlemen and 2,041 ladies.

The religious persuasion of the various teachers may be marked. Presbyterians, 1,542; Methodists, 1,415; Church of England, 795; Roman Catholic, 552; Baptists, 266; Congregationalists, 65; and others in smaller numbers, making up the balance.