

to the Council of Public Instruction for improving the prescribed list of school books. When I think of the books used in my early days, I am ready to wish to be young again, to enjoy the advantages now provided for pupils and teachers. Indeed our school requisites are not far behind the oldest educational countries on the globe.

*Calamity.*—That terrible scourge of the schools, diphtheria, began to make its appearance about the first of September, in the Western end of the County, and spread eastwardly, showing itself with more or less virulence in every section until it reached the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, I had to stop visiting schools lest I should spread and intensify the disease. It was not long until several schools had to be closed. If the cholera had appeared with half the virulence and death rate, the whole of our population would have stood aghast. At first an infatuation prevailed; too many flattered themselves that there was no danger. Neglect of school hygiene prepared for the rapid spread of the disease. I stated in my report in the fall of seventy-four that the time could not be far distant when the Council of Public Instruction would require inspectors to apply an efficient system of hygiene in the schools of this Province. In 1872 scarlatina and mumps decimated our schools; next year small pox came. In 1874 scarlet fever and diphtheria again filled the land with mourning. Our public schools, foster and spread epidemic diseases. Neglected out-houses in close proximity to the schools pollute the air in summer and fall; dry earth applications for such out-houses should be included in regulations for Trustees. So I recommended two years ago. The simplest laws of school health were unheeded or neglected. Eighteen hundred and seventy-six came, and brought a very dry summer. Water was scarce. The dust brought into the school-room with the feet of the children when the room was swept without being sufficiently sprinkled, filled the room and produced affections among the children. The extreme heat spread the poisoned air of the neglected out-houses and prepared for the sad ravages of the disease which ensued. It is the opinion of the highest medical authority that diphtheria finds its victims among those who are in such circumstances. They readily contract the disease, by personal contact with those affected or from infected articles, such as books, clothing, or the poisoned germs adhering to those who come from the sick room.

*Bible and Religion.*—As many of our school children have passed suddenly into the unseen world, I crave your indulgence for a remark or two under this heading. The Government of Bengal has accepted the offer of the Calcutta Bible Society to supply all the State schools with the Bible. These schools are receiving help from the Government, and are public schools in the fullest sense of the term, just as much as our own. Most thoroughly, therefore, is the State, in that great Province, by this act committed to the work of putting the Bible in the public schools—placing it in the hands and having it read in the hearing of the young; and as the Dominion stands next to India for extent and importance as a British possession, we should seek to come up to the example set us in this respect. This news from India casts a sombre shade on our standing order, which is taken to mean that any one objecting to the reading of the Scriptures (the only devotional exercise employed in our schools) can have the time fixed for such exercise before the opening or after the time fixed for the closing of the daily work of the school. Indeed, it seems to be generally conceded that there can be no legal teaching of religion allowed in our public schools. But if it is the duty of a Judge on the bench to instruct a child-witness in the solemnity of an oath, it is not improper that *all children* should be taught this qualification for good citizenship in the public schools. If the law tenders to every officer of the State, from the Governor down to the humblest voter or witness, a copy of the Scriptures, appealing to him in the words "so help me God," it is not also proper that it should require that the