

The Nova Scotia School Curriculum.

David Allison, Esq., LL. D., Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia, comments as follows on the practical results, so far, of the provincial course of study, in his annual report:

The returns included in Table VI. indicate that the regulative influence of the prescribed course of study upon the methods, order, and subjects of instruction in the public schools, is year by year increasing. Certain studies are of a fundamental character; they constitute the true substance of all education. On the intellectual side, the utility of a common school is primarily to be measured by the efficiency with which these branches, sometimes called "instrumental," as furnishing the key to all advanced or special knowledge, are taught. From this point of view it is gratifying to learn on the testimony of our most observant and experienced educators, that these rudimentary subjects were never so well taught in so many schools as since other useful, though in a strictly educational sense, less essential branches, have been incorporated in the working scheme of studies.

The influence of the course of study to which I have referred, is particularly noticeable in the considerable increases reported from year to year in the number of pupils receiving instruction outside of the purely instrumentary branches. A beginning, at least, has been made in teaching in an informal way the elements of science to the pupils of the ordinary grades. Natural science is now occupying a more and more important place in education, and the day predicted by a great writer, "when ignorance of its primary facts and laws will be regarded as a defect second only to ignorance of the primary laws of religion and morality," is probably not far off. If science then means a knowledge of nature, and if it is worth studying at all, it would be difficult to show good reason for excluding it from any scheme of elementary education. Definite instruction in a particular science, with its generalizations and use of technical terms, should not be demanded until the pupil's powers have been gradually unfolded and the way has been led up to it by a course of preliminary training carefully adapted to the end in view. This preliminary training, in the shape of simple object lessons, should begin with the opening of school life; and nothing seems better established than that in this informal untechnical way, the observing and inductive faculties may be beneficially trained, and a good and varied knowledge of important principles and phenomena acquired. In our own case the complete realization of such a system of instruction must be the work of time. Until recently, the training of most of our teachers was exclusively literary, their licenses having been obtained without the mastery of the simplest elements of a single science. This fact itself interposed a serious obstacle to the introduction of scientific teaching. Then many teachers, perhaps not unnaturally, failed to understand precisely what was expected, and augmented real difficulties by inventing imaginary ones. Still it is felt that in view of all the circumstances of the case, a satisfactory beginning has been made. With true professional spirit many teachers have made it a matter of pride and honor to obtain, by special effort, the

necessary qualifications. The curriculum of the normal school and the syllabus of examination have been modified to promote this part of our school work, while outside of our regularly established educational agencies it is proper that I should acknowledge the special stimulus and aid which the movement has received from the Summer School of Science, elsewhere noted in this report, and from the EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, a periodical of a very high order, devoted to the interests of our maritime schools, and marked by the prominence given to science and to experimental methods of teaching its principles.

Superintendent's Report of Education in New Brunswick.

There is a satisfactory degree of activity and progress in the several aspects of the service. A large number of new school-houses have been built, others substantially repaired, and many supplied with suitable furniture and needed appliances, while many school-grounds and premises have been made places of neatness, beauty and attractiveness. The inner work of the schools, as attested by the inspectors, has been carried on with undiminished efficiency.

This begins Superintendent Crockett's report; and it is encouraging to note the evidence of general progress.

Irregular attendance, and a consequent falling off in the daily average is a matter of regret. The Superintendent shows the loss to parents and pupils, and suggests that teachers use all their influence to secure greater regularity of attendance, especially by frequent visits to parents.

The revised course of study, to which an extended reference was made in the March REVIEW, is printed in the report, and separate copies have since been placed in the hands of the teachers of the province.

In regard to teachers' salaries, it is gratifying to note that the salaries of first-class teachers, both male and female, show a slight increase over the preceding year, and the Superintendent observes: "An efficient school service is not only the best protection to society but it is the cheapest, even at a cost much in excess of the present rates."

Secondary education is provided for by forty-four superior and fourteen grammar schools. The former are represented in an efficient condition, and have awakened in the districts in which they have been established a great educational interest and activity. Of the grammar schools the Superintendent says:

These schools as constituted are teaching as much and as effectively as they can teach, but this falls short in both cases of what it ought to be. My view as to their inadequate