

In other parts a road has been made by Government, but it is so intersected by rivers, streams and mountains that at certain seasons of the year it is impossible for the traveller to proceed except on foot. Yet these difficulties are light compared with the obstacles which the people themselves almost everywhere throw in the way of the Inspector.

In his last Report, Inspector Bourgeois says "he sees no longer any of those ignoble beings so appropriately designated extinguishers (*éteignoirs*), who in some parishes were continually appealing to the popular prejudices, preaching ignorance and inciting the rate-payers to quarrel, in short doing all in their power to deprive their children of the benefits of education." But unfortunately Mr. Béchard still meets with some of these *éteignoirs* in his district. He says: "I can understand how men who do not themselves enjoy the benefits of education, or how a population traditionally opposed to all taxation, as are the Irish and the Acadians, will confront the school-rate with ordinary taxes and resist its collection; but I cannot conceive how men enjoying the advantages of a good education can, through sordid motives, apply themselves to exciting and strengthening the popular antipathy." But they pretend, continues Inspector Béchard, that they wish for schools, and are only opposed to being compelled by law to pay for having their children educated. Still, when left to themselves, and uncoerced, they will do nothing, but allow almost all the schools to be closed up; and instead of keeping pace with the rest of the country in the gradual advance, they will be actually retrograding. Under the voluntary system the same persons have always had to pay for keeping up the schools, so that it is very reasonable to suppose that their generosity and patience should be exhausted. These serious obstacles in the way of education should be removed at once as they keep this part of the country in a backward state. All the paying situations, from that of the humble bailiff upwards, are, with very few exceptions, in the hands of strangers. There is not a single school in the whole county kept by a native of Gaspé. Convinced that it was absolutely necessary to have the assessment levied throughout the district, he set to work energetically, though in the face of such a determined and threatening opposition, that he sometimes felt disheartened and almost disposed to abandon the enterprise. He was employed the whole summer in visiting, for the first time, the municipalities under his supervision; everywhere he exerted himself in reconciling the inhabitants to the school tax, the municipality of Grande Rivière being the only one in which he met with no opposition. In some places he was insulted and in others would, it appears, have met with worse treatment, had not some generous persons interposed in his behalf. They imagined that in ridiculing themselves of the inspector they would also get rid of the law. Indeed it may be said that all who aim at promoting education in this district only court unpopularity, hatred and disappointment. But there are however some redeeming facts to set against these drawbacks. As in other places where the School Acts have been opposed, Gaspé can claim men who have devoted themselves to the cause of education, and who have resisted the popular prejudices, although by so doing they have incurred the risk of becoming very unpopular, and, in some cases, of losing very material advantages. To the missionaries, who here as elsewhere have ever been found ready to forward all enterprises that bear on the interests of religion and education, the country is indebted for the good example set by them; and Mr. Béchard says his thanks are due to these zealous promoters of the cause, as also to Rev. Mr. Ker, for the moral support they afforded him on all occasions. He is also much indebted to other persons whose names will be found below, for their co-operation in the work. "In my Report for the ensuing year," he continues, "I trust I shall be enabled to convey the intelligence that all the schools in Gaspé have been put under legal control. This important result will have been obtained through the praiseworthy efforts of these enlightened and generous men, and through the Superintendent, who never fails to give his support to all who apply to him, and who so ably attends to the duties of his office." Opposition to the law was of course the main obstacle to be overcome, but other causes combined to produce the state of things already described, which are thus commented upon in the Report:

1st. The ignorance, in several municipalities, of the school commissioners. Parliament should pass a law by which no person should be eligible as school commissioner, who did not know at least, how to read and write.

2nd. The almost total absence of books, maps and other necessities in school, and the want of school-houses in some parts.

3rd. The unpardonable apathy shown by the commissioners in

not visiting the schools under their control. If we except the members of the clergy, there were not two commissioners in fifteen who visited the schools; some who had been seven or eight years in office had not made even a single visit. The curé was almost the only one who accompanied the inspector in his visits to the schools of the parish; and in several places, where no clergyman resided, the inspector had to make his visits and attend to examinations unassisted, as no one would for a moment be diverted from his usual occupations.

4th. Irregular attendance at school, especially during the fishing season, is a very serious evil and one which, together with that of the voluntary contribution, will be most difficult to remedy. In the spring, children between the ages of from 9 to 16 years are either kept away from school or attend very irregularly. In consequence they often forget during summer what they had learned during the winter. Most of the fishermen are poor, and many may be excused on this account, as they no doubt require the assistance of their children; but they are far from being all justifiable.

5th. The incapacity and neglect of those who fill the office of secretary-treasurer frequently cause great embarrassment in the district; and the importance of this office is not sufficiently understood; if the incumbent is active and intelligent he can render great service; if he is ignorant or negligent he greatly impedes the progress of affairs. But it was expected they would become better informed; as their duties and those of the commissioners were clearly explained in the circulars which the Superintendent had forwarded for distribution. Copies of the School Acts, with notes written by Mr. Béchard, pointing out the clauses amended or repealed, were also distributed throughout the district. He believed much good must result from these distributions.

6th. Another unfavorable circumstance,—the last enumerated—was the want of respect shown to the teacher by the parents. In several of the municipalities of this district the calling of the teacher is not held in that high estimation which it deserves, and he does not himself meet with all the gratitude and respect to which he is entitled. Unkind words, and even abusive language are not unfrequently addressed to him in presence of his pupils. On this subject Mr. B. quotes—as embodying a full expression of his own views—the following extract from, "The Teacher and the Parent," by Mr. Charles Nonthend:

"I have thus far spoken of the teacher in relation to awakening an interest, on the part of his pupils, and now propose to designate one or two particulars in which he may awaken parental interest, and secure parental co-operation. In passing, however, it may be observed, that whatever tends to interest the children will, most surely, have a favorable influence upon the parents; and we may, indeed, say it is impossible to obtain a right feeling on the part of the pupils, without securing a corresponding one on the part of the parents. It is equally true, that whatever may incite the parents to judicious feeling and right action, will surely cause a better state of feeling with the pupils. Hence, whatever may be suggested as promotive of the interest of either party, will be, in a certain sense, beneficial to all concerned."

"I wish," adds Mr. Béchard, "these fine sentiments were deeply impressed on the minds of every father and mother in my district of inspection."

"The volumes which you have placed at my disposal as prizes for the pupils have uniformly produced a good effect upon the children and their parents. In these trophies—awarded to merit alone—the vanquished saw incentives strong enough to stimulate their ambition; and in some localities they helped to secure a more regular attendance at school. Accordingly I aimed at giving the best prizes to such as had proved the most assiduous,—a fact easily ascertained from the register kept by the master."

Each municipality is then noticed separately.

"Pabos and Newport.—This municipality contains three districts. Until last summer its school affairs were in a wretched condition. It had then but one school, situated in the District of Newport and kept by Miss Jeanne Ahier, who was not competent to teach even an elementary school, and of course had no diploma. I desired the commissioners to dismiss her, and they did so a few weeks afterwards. In the other districts,—those of Grand and Little Pabos,—the schools were closed, but reopened in October; the first by Mr. Louis Ruel, the other by Mr. Joseph Barette, a pupil of the Jacques Cartier Normal School. Mr. Léandre Dagneault now conducts the school at Newport in the room of Miss Ahier. I have not visited these schools since September last, but I have every reason to believe that these teachers (the two last especially, whom I have engaged myself) will acquit themselves of their task with zeal and success. In this municipality, two thirds