

JOURNAL OF

Province of



EDUCATION,

Ontario.

VOL. XXV.

TORONTO, JULY, 1872.

No. 7.

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PUBLIC SCHOOL-HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

One of the most valuable features of the School legislation of last year was that which provided for increased School-house accommodation. By a singular oversight, no provision was made in the comprehensive School Law of 1850 for this essential part of our School Economy, nor was it, even, embodied in the School Law Amendment Act of 1860, which was designed to remedy certain proved defects in the law. Indeed, not until after twenty years' experience had demonstrated the want of some general regulation relating to School-house Accommodation being made, did the necessity for a clearly defined regulation on the subject force itself on the attention of our Educationists.

Although some opposition was made, at first, to this most desirable reform, yet on the whole, it has been hailed as a real boon by the vast majority of the trustees. Never was there such singular unanimity on any one subject among the intelligent friends of our improved School System as on this. It has (when proper explanations have been given to the parties concerned) been regarded as a most enlightened step in advance. The provision of the law has been framed, as we think all will admit, in the interests of humanity, cleanliness, order and decency. It is true that in many cases a thoughtless apathy or inattention alone had prevented anything from being done to improve the condition of the school premises; but, in other cases, timidity on the part of the trustees, or the fear of taxation on the part of the ratepayers had paralyzed local effort; and from year to year nothing was done to put the school-house in even a reasonable state of repair. Hence the necessity for the interposition of some higher authority, in the shape of

Statute Law, to rouse public attention to the subject, and virtually to decide the question in favour of the health of the teacher and pupils and the advancement of the school. These were, really, the parties who had suffered so long from local apathy or selfishness, while they were powerless to effect any change for the better.

Were it not vouched for by the written testimony of the Public School Inspectors, who have examined and reported to the Department upon the state of the school houses and premises under their jurisdiction, it could scarcely be believed that trustees and parents would, in so many cases, have allowed their children to congregate, day after day, and year after year, in the miserable hovels which, up to this year had existed as so-called school-houses in many parts of the province. And yet, so it was. Neither the ill health of the teacher, nor the listless faces of the children, added to the warning of medical men, or the counsel of local superintendents, could, in many localities, rouse trustees or ratepayers from their apathy. "Their fathers, or other relations, or friends, had gone to the school, and it was good enough for them." This, or some other valueless excuse, was too often their reply, and hence nothing was done, or would be attempted. Not even, in many cases, would the spirited example of their neighbours in other localities influence them; and often, in inverse ratio to the wealth of the neighbourhood, would the spirit of selfish economy prevail, and even be defended on the plea of poverty!

It is true that many people had no definite idea as to what was actually required to be done, in order to provide what was really necessary to put their school-house and premises in a proper and efficient state. Such people would say: "Tell us what we should do and we will cheerfully do it." "We know that our children and the teachers are sufferers, and that they are not in such a school-house as we should like them to be in. But we do not know the proper size to build the school-house, the space for air which we should leave, or the best way to ventilate the building or premises. If the law or regulations would lay down some definite general rules on the subject, we should be glad to follow them, but we do not like to spend money on a new school-house, and then find that we were all wrong in our calculations on the subject." Such excuses as these were often urged, and they were reasonable in some cases. Trustees, too, would say, when pressed to do something to better