

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF MR. INSPECTOR BRUCE

COUNTY OF HUNTINGDON, PART OF THE COUNTIES OF CHATEAUGUAY AND ARGENTEUIL, AND THE PROTESTANT POPULATION OF THE CITY OF MONTREAL.

First Report.

My present report shows far fewer schools in an unsatisfactory state than any of my previous reports. Of all the schools in operation at the time of my visits, only 11 have I had to report unfavorably. Of these, three are in the parish of St. Anicet, two are in the municipality of Dundee, two in Godmanchester, one in Hinchinbrook, one in Franklin, one in St. Chrysostôme, and one in Hemmingford. Of those of which I have to report favorably, 9 were found in an excellent state, 56 in a satisfactory state, and 43 in a fair and improving state.

To bring up our schools to that high standard at which we aim, many are the obstacles which have yet to be removed, and the difficulties to be surmounted. But even a bird's-eye view is sufficient to show that within the last few years not a few of the former have been done away with, and many of the latter greatly lessened. Ignorance of our school law, peculiar and shallow notions about teachers and teaching, officious interference with teachers and school management, miserly dispositions, putting more value on a few dollars than on a good education or on the general improvement of society, we reckon among our greatest hindrances to educational advancement.

There are two other things to which I beg to direct attention, which I consider very hindering to educational progress:

1st. The many inefficient teachers sent abroad by our Boards of Examiners. Their motives for passing individuals of low qualifications, at first especially, showed consideration. Teachers then were few; but that state of things has passed away. The scarcity of teachers is not now the want: the scarcity of good teachers is now the great want.

2nd. Irregular attendance is another hindrance to progress in our schools. This is a general and a crying evil. The most painstaking, the most persevering, and the most skilled and talented teachers cannot successfully contend with it.

The examination of schools is a most important work.

The suggestions I make with reference to this subject I wish to be considered as the results of considerable experience, and some consideration.

1. The inspector should proceed to examine a school with its daily journal before him.

2. To do as much justice as possible to both the teacher and the scholar, he should judge of his progress with special reference to his age, the time he has attended school, the regularity of his attendance, and his capacity. For the first three, he looks in the journals; for the fourth, he must look partly to the teacher.

3. On beginning the examination—let us suppose with the lowest classes—he examines class after class, taking care to examine them on no prepared lessons.

4. In collecting results, it should be with reference to the things referred to under No. 2, noting, as he proceeds, how they read, the teacher's method of teaching and training them, what knowledge they have of what is taught them, their advancement with reference to their state, when they entered school, how his way of teaching and manner tend to excite the children to seek instruction, and observing whether instruction has been bestowed equally upon all.

5. But care must be taken not to keep any class, a juvenile class especially, long under trial. Let it be searching—strictly judicious—while continued.

1. *Elgin*.—The schools of this township are all in operation. Three are conducted with tolerable efficiency, and two are not in a very satisfactory state. The teachers of Nos. 2 and 3 never taught before, and need considerable experience and knowledge of effective teaching to make them successful instructors.

2. *Huntingdon*.—All the schools in this village are in operation. The schools under the commissioners are in a satisfactory state; teaching efficient, showing considerable intelligence and skill. The academy is not so well attended as usual. Respecting the talents and skill of the present Principal in conducting it, there can be no doubt; he is an efficient and a laborious educator. The dissentient school in the village is in a fair state.

I wish commissioners and trustees would discharge their duties as efficiently as the teachers.

3. *Godmanchester*.—Not many schools in this municipality are at present very ably conducted. So frequently do they change their teachers that schools well conducted one year are very often but

indifferently conducted the following year. The best conducted schools at present are those of Nos. 2, 5, 6 and 10. Of the dissentient schools, No. 1 is by much the best conducted school, and the scholars are far more advanced. School No. 3, dissentient, is in a low state; and No. 3 is next to defunct.

4. *Dundee*.—I was much pleased to find the commissioners so earnest and willing to second my efforts in improving their schools and raising the teaching to a higher standard. With the exception of Nos. 5 and 7, their schools are at present in fully a better state than usual. The children of No. 6 showed the most advancement, especially in reading, spelling on slates, writing, and, the more advanced scholars, in arithmetic; it is also the school in which grammar and geography are taught to much advantage.

The great hindrance to the advancement of education in this township still continues, viz: the short engagement of teachers and never keeping the same teacher sufficiently long in the same school.

The dissentient school in Dundee, like the majority of dissentient schools under my supervision, is doing little good. It is oftener closed than in operation, and when open it is for a short time, and conducted by teachers so low in qualification that the children benefit little by their instructions.

5. *St. Anicet*.—The state of the schools in this parish, under the commissioners, differs little, if any, from what it was when I last reported. The most thriving is No. 12; its children are considerably in advance, in all the branches they study, of those of others of their schools.

The commissioners are not very fortunate in getting the right kind of teachers; it is true they engage teachers only having diplomas, but so often are trustees, commissioners and myself disappointed and altogether deceived by such guarantees of qualification, that we find it best and more to the advantage of schools to choose teachers with reference to our own knowledge of their capabilities and skill in teaching. Our Examining Boards are seldom successful in ascertaining the true qualifications, aptness to teach, and tact in conducting schools, of those who come before them to undergo an examination.

The dissentient schools, with the exception of No. 2, have considerably improved. Their trustees appear to be earnest in discharging their duties and doing their utmost to engage efficient teachers; but they have not a few difficulties with which to contend, and which are not easily surmounted.

6. *Hinchinbrook*.—The schools of Hinchinbrook have generally teachers of fair qualifications and zealous in the discharge of their duty; and it is worthy of notice that when some near townships had scarcely one teacher deserving favorable notice, Hinchinbrook never wanted some able, devoted teachers. Nor are its commissioners given so much to changing teachers as other municipalities under my jurisdiction; hence the more steady advancement in education of its regular school-going youth.

7. *Franklin*.—The schools of this municipality are all in their ordinary state of efficiency. Indeed, four, viz., No. 1, 3, 4 and 5, are very satisfactorily conducted. Of no school, therefore, have I to report unfavorably.

8. *St. Malachie*.—I have to report of no school unfavorably. The only school in the parish doing little good, is the dissentient school in the village of Durham. This school is kept very irregularly in operation, and very seldom has it an efficient teacher. The schools whose pupils showed most advancement, are Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7: Nos. 3, 6, 10, 11 and 14 are making very fair advancement. The children of this parish are favoured with not a little of intelligent teaching. Much is done in nearly all their schools to create in the mind of the scholar a craving for knowledge—a desire to understand everything taught,—thus urging him on to higher attainment.

9. *St. Jean Chrysostôme*.—The schools in this parish under my immediate supervision are all in a satisfactory state. Two of the trustees of the dissentient school were present at its examination.

(To be continued.)

Notices of Books and Recent Publications.

LANGÉVIN.—*L'Histoire du Canada en tableaux, par Jean Langevin, Prêtre, 2e édition.*—Coté & Co., Quebec. 8 p.

This very useful pamphlet contains chronological and other tables arranged under the following heads: 1st. Political events; 2nd. Religious events; 3rd. Lists of Vice-Roys, Governors, &c.; 4th. Lists of R. C. Archbishops and Bishops; 5th. Discoveries, battles, treaties, &c., both periods of French and English rule in this country being