

# The Educational Weekly.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 8, 1885.

By an amendment to the School Act made last session, school boards in villages, towns and cities, by giving notice to the councils of their respective municipalities before the first of October, may require the annual election of trustees to be made on the day on which municipal councillors are elected. We have before stated that if any new legislation were made in the matter it should be only permissive in its operation, and the attitude of the public to the question has justified this opinion. But few school boards have availed themselves of the privilege. The reason assigned in every case is that politics and educational administration are already too closely related—that no benefit would be gained by the change that would not be countervailed by the introduction of partyism into educational affairs.

We stated last week that we should indicate in this issue a means by which the attention of the public could be more strongly directed than it is towards the art work now done in our schools, and a healthy stimulus be thereby given to the study of drawing. Our proposition is simply that the Industrial Association of Toronto be induced to take the matter up, and to afford space for the exhibition of the art work of schools, and to offer prizes for drawing and designing to be competed for by schools and by individual pupils. That such exhibitions and competitions as those of the Industrial Association do much to stimulate invention, good workmanship, and the application of art to industry, cannot be denied. But they have not, as yet, reached the classes with whom improvement is most possible, and upon whom judicious stimulus has most effect—the children of the public schools. We would propose that prizes or medals of considerable value should be offered for the best art work done by (1) an entire school, (2) by an entire class of a school, (3) by any individual pupil of a school. There might be several kinds of competition; for example, (a) in drawing from copies; (b) in drawing from models; (c) in inventive drawing or drawings suitable for designs or patterns; and (d) a special class in which drawings of merit not included in the above might be placed, as of figures, of faces, of flowers, of landscapes. Were the prizes or medals of good value a large number of pupils and schools would compete; and if the association felt reluctant to pay for the cost of deciding the prizes, we are quite sure competent gentlemen could be found in the city who would be glad to undertake the work gratuitously. Nor should the necessary

expenses be borne by the association entirely. The competition is an undertaking of provincial importance, and should receive the official sanction and pecuniary support of the Education Department. Such exhibitions have done much for art, and for the improvement of handicraft in all parts of the States, and, if we mistake not, in England. In the States they have been held, as a rule, under the auspices of the state or national boards of education. We suggest a composite plan as likely to be more feasible and more effective.

THE complaint made by Mr. Wetherell before the high school masters at their late meeting, that too little attention is paid by the Education Department to the expressed wishes of their Section, does not seem to us to be justified by the facts. Rather, it appears to us, that much of the inconstant policy of the Education Department in high school matters in past years has resulted from the vain attempts of the Ministers to steer their ship by the Masters' compasses, whose needles have been as variable as any weather-cock. "Payment by results" was inaugurated in response to the pronounced criticism of the masters upon the way in which the legislative grant went to schools which did not earn it; it was abrogated in deference to their no less emphatic protests against its working. It had scarcely become defunct, when its resuscitation was attempted. The "Inter-mediate" was made to count *pro tanto* in the professional examinations, was made the equivalent of a third class teachers' non-professional examination, was restored to its original position as an examination for testing advancement simply, and was finally disestablished—each phase of its existence, and its final dissolution, the effect of the opinion of the high school masters upon the "powers that be." If of late there has been any disposition on the part of the Department to disregard the requests of masters (although we have noticed none worth recording) it can only be from the fact which Mr. Wetherell strongly deplures, and which we have before pointed out, that the number of masters who attend the meetings of the section is rarely such as to entitle the section to be considered a representative body. As Mr. Wetherell says, some eight or nine per cent. of the total number of masters cannot be deemed to express any decided conviction of the whole body. Nor is this small percentage either constant in its make-up or regular or punctual in its attendance. What is wanted, in addition to increased attendance and greater zeal on the part of the masters, is a representative com-

mittee, duly elected by all the masters and assistants, to whom the findings of the section can be referred for approval, and when judged necessary by them, for transmission to the Minister. In the meantime, no decision of the section should be considered as representative unless it has been adopted by a fair quorum of the whole constituency—not less than twenty-five at any rate.

THE motion adopted at the late meeting of the high school masters, that the Minister be requested to consider the Legislative Committee of the section as members of his Advisory Committee, to whom he should submit all matters relating to high schools upon which he might wish information, seems to us an illustration of the hurried and sometimes inconsiderate manner in which the business of the section is transacted. The Legislative Committee is elected on the third day, often when the attendance is scant, without previous nomination, and often by mere motion—the three first proposed being, as a rule, those who are chosen. Now, if the Minister is to be expected to consider this committee as representative of the entire body of high school masters, he should have some reasonable assurance that the entire body of masters had some voice in their choice. There can be no doubt that a representative committee of advisers, with statutory, or even with conventional privileges and powers, would be entitled to great consideration from the Minister, and would do much to make his actions commendable to the profession and in harmony with popular feeling. But no committee would be entitled to such consideration, or would be deemed by the profession to represent it, unless it were duly elected by the profession at large. If the masters, as a body, elected two members, there could be no objection that the masters attending at the annual meeting should elect a third. They could claim this additional representation by virtue of their greater interest in professional work. This third representative, also, would be able to express the views of the section (often the result of much deliberation) before his fellow-members on the committee, and thus not only the particular views of the section, but also those of the whole body of masters, could be said to be represented to the Minister. But no committee, hurriedly chosen, by a mere fraction of the whole, can be said to be the accredited representatives of the whole. We do not intend, in speaking thus, to disparage in any way the importance of the meetings of the section; our opinion, on that matter, has been expressed most positively. We merely assert that to the section should not be accorded more consideration than it is entitled to.