

population, but in Ontario the given number forms nearly a fourth. Another peculiarity is that while the whole population is increasing, the school population, according to the returns, is decreasing. I take the liberty of directing the attention of the inspectors to these features of our school statistics. Looking at the figures given by the annual Departmental Reports on Education, find that for the year 1858 the daily average attendance was thirty-five per cent. of the number on the roll, for the year 1868 the daily average attendance was forty per cent., for 1880, forty-six per cent., and for 1881, forty-five per cent. So that, apparently, the annual increase in the average daily attendance has been one-half per cent. Examining the last report issued by the education authorities of the United States of America, I find that the percentage of the whole school children who attended school for the year was thirty-four, whereas the daily average percentage of the number on the roll for the same year was fifty-nine; in one city, the daily average attendance of those on the roll is reported to have been eighty-nine per cent. The school age in England and Wales is between five and thirteen; the percentage of the whole number of school children whose names were on the roll for 1881 was seventy; the daily average attendance of those whose names appeared on the roll for the same year was 83.45 per cent., and is year by year becoming higher. For Scotland, where the school age is between five and fourteen, the percentage for 1881 of the whole number of school children expected to attend public elementary schools, was sixty-six, and for those whose names were on the roll, the percentage of the daily average attendance for the same year was seventy-nine; also, as in England and Wales, this percentage is annually becoming greater. From these figures

it is seen that we are far behind England and Wales, Scotland, and even the States of the neighbouring Union in the matter of school attendance. The law compels the local school authorities to make provision for teaching all the school children in the country, the money has been invested for this purpose by the parents, teachers have been engaged for instructing the scholars; but though the machinery is complete in all its parts, the learners are not in the school-rooms. The financial loss, though it is not inconsiderable, is only the least part of the actual loss sustained by the people on account of the small daily average attendance of the scholars. Much more attention is required from trustees, inspectors, teachers and parents, in order to secure the average attendance which has been obtained, without much difficulty, in other English-speaking communities. It is not at all creditable to us, that our wealthy and populous Province of Ontario should be so far behind other countries existing under similar conditions, in this essential requisite of prosperous school-keeping.

Having thus briefly, but as well as may be, considered the scholars and their attendance at school, let us look at the teachers; as respects their (a) literary attainments; (b) experience in teaching; (c) length of service. It is quite unnecessary for me to state what are the conditions, both as regards literary attainments and experience gained in teaching, in order to obtain the certificates of the various grades; all these I may safely assume are well known to you. In the public elementary schools, there are 6,928 teachers engaged. By the last annual report of the Minister of Education they are classified as follows:—Number of teachers holding third class certificates, 4,346; number holding second class certificates, 2,059, and number holding first class, 523: that is, the