

In future I shall always endeavour to provide that the teachers, both male and female, who, in each district of inspection, shall best carry out the official programme of instruction, and whose schools shall be reported to be the best conducted, shall also receive some testimony of the just appreciation of the authorities. Such encouragement is no more than is due to the zeal of individual teachers, and I hope that the honorable distinctions that may thus be conferred by the Department of Public Instruction will operate in impelling the Boards of School Commissioners and Trustees to increase the remuneration of meritorious instructors.

LIBRARIES.

The 10th section of chap. 15 Consol. Statut. L. C., authorizes the foundation of "Parish and Township Libraries." Unfortunately this provision of the law has produced very limited results, and it is with a view to a better state of things that it has been thought well to replace that Statute by Sect. 5, Vict. 40, chap. 22, 1876. It is not only the parishes and townships which, in future, may establish such libraries, but the cities, towns and villages have the same facilities extended to them. Moreover, for this object, every municipality has the right to pledge a portion of its revenues, or to issue debentures, under the authority of the Superintendent, for a sum proportional to its income from school rates, redeemable in 10, 15 or 20 years. It is unnecessary for me to say that I will do all in my power to aid in the foundation of these libraries, and I cannot too urgently recommend you to exert yourselves in this behalf without delay; for it is only true that your children do not derive advantage enough from their instruction in the Elementary Schools. Such instruction you are aware, has for its object to fit them to study, to learn, to *acquire knowledge for themselves*, and to be useful in whatever position in life they may afterwards choose. But what is the fact? No sooner have they left school than they too frequently forget what they have learned, and but for the practice of reading their prayer books at church they would even forget how to read. To what are we to attribute this state of things if not mainly to the want of books in the country parts? A well selected library, consisting of moral, instructive, interesting books, would prevent such a deplorable result. People would acquire the habit of reading and studying outside of the school, and what advantages might not the agricultural class, in particular, derive from a well selected collection of books treating of Agriculture, gardening, &c.? As to the management and inspection of these libraries, the council of Public Instruction will make regulations which will have the force of law after having been published in the *Journal of Education*.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL HOUSES.

The 7th subsection of sect. 64 chap. 15 Statut Consol. L. C. and the 4th section of Victor. 31 chap. 22, are repealed and replaced by another statute which you will find in sect. 64, chap. 15, in its proper place. You will observe that the law does not now give you the same latitude as formerly in respect of the construction of school houses; in future you are required to submit for approval of the Superintendent the plans and specifications for such buildings, or to adopt those which shall be furnished by him on demand.

You can readily credit that the promoters of this law had no intention to impose on the municipalities a too heavy burden; the object was, that, in the construction

of school houses, the aim should not be to erect costly architectural structures, but buildings which, while not unattractive in aspect and conforming to the requirements of hygiene, should not entail on the scholastic revenues too burdensome charges. The desire is, while considering the pockets of the parents, to keep in view the claims of the health of the scholars. A school house sufficiently attractive in appearance need not necessarily cost more than an ugly one; between beauty and ugliness, in the matter of school architecture, the question is not so much one of dollars and cents as of proportion and design.

The school house should be the most elegant and most attractive building in a municipality. "If you can possibly possess" says M. Cousin "a structure in a district, situated in a spot more agreeable than others, better built, better protected from cold, more pleasant in aspect, better adapted than others to exert a salutary influence on the minds and hearts of those who occupy it, it should be the school house." It is there that your children pass the greater portion of each day; their sojourn there ought to be rendered agreeable. Study, at their time of life, is more or less a painful effort; we should therefore know how to render the house of study as attractive as possible. Let us be careful not to make the children disgusted with their surroundings, as their future well being may thus be injuriously affected.

The allowance of interior space should not be less than nine square feet of floor and 100 cubic feet of respirable air; but in the case of many existing school-houses a single small apartment is assigned for the use of 40, 50, 60, or even 70 scholars. How can these be expected to feel comfortable and pleased when thus packed together and breathing a vitiated atmosphere? They are not themselves conscious of being exposed daily to contract fevers and mortal disease, but the constraint which they cannot fail to experience is sufficient to make them constantly long for their return to the paternal roof. Mark what is stated by Mr. Inspector Fontaine: "In general, they (the school houses) are too small, badly constructed, and cold in winter; while the school house ought to be one of the prettiest and most comfortable buildings in the district, it is often, nay almost always, the one which most offends the view. It is only necessary to remain inside of it during a few hours in winter to convince one that it is too cold and scarcely habitable. No wonder then that the children feel disposed to *shirk* going to school."

It has become absolutely necessary to put an end to such a state of things. Every school house should be lofty, airy, well lighted, at a suitable distance from the highway, and built on a site of not less than half an acre in extent, in order that the outside accommodations may be adequate. It should contain at least two apartments for the scholars, one for the younger and the other for the more advanced. A portion of the building might be assigned for the occupation of the teacher and his family; and this should include four or five apartments, for it is only decent that we should provide good lodgings for the person who, next to the minister of God, labours most for the welfare of the people amidst whom he is employed.

It would be well, whenever you decide upon building a school house, to apply to Superintendent for a plan, intimating at the same time of what dimensions you desire it to be and what amount of money you intend to devote to the object; or, which would be preferable, you might transmit your own plans to the Superintendent who will consider if they respond to the intention of the law. In every such case I would always regard it as a duty to second your zealous endeavours. The general regu-