

From the ...

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The present number of the Journal closes the second volume, and it is to be hoped that the third will be commenced under better auspices. The aim of the Journal and of all the other efforts of the present superintendent, has been to elevate and improve the elementary education of the province as far as possible under the present arrangements, and to prepare the way for such a revision of the whole system as should place it upon higher ground, and remove the difficulties that now oppose the improvement of the schools and the extension of their benefits.

In looking back upon the labors that have now extended over nearly three years, there appears nearly equal reason for thankfulness, hope, and regret.—Thankfulness for the removal of many threatening difficulties and dangers, and for the cheering signs of change for the better appearing everywhere on the surface of our provincial education.—Hope that the increasing agitation and interest on the subject will bring forth happy results, and that we are now on the threshold of a better system.—Regret that so many fields of usefulness have been of necessity neglected, and that over large districts education still presents the same dead and unfruitful aspect as in former years.

The earlier efforts of the Superintendent were much hampered by the impossibility of obtaining reliable information on the actual state of the schools, and by the difficulty of dealing in any general way with the variety of methods that prevailed in all parts of their management. These evils are now greatly mitigated, though the defective nature of the present mode of supporting education has prevented their entire removal; and a new officer, with an improved system to administer, will enter on a very different field from that which presented itself in 1850.

It is a remarkable and significant fact that so many changes for the better are visible within counties where Education was previously in an advanced condition. There every suggestion for improvement has been acted upon with activity, and energetically pushed out to useful results. On the other hand in many districts in which Education has all along been little better than a name, every attempt to improve and stimulate has been received with apathetic indifference. Some

of this untilled ground, however, has been broken up, and it is satisfactory to learn that one step in advance is sure to be the prelude to others. There is not a Teacher in the Province who has not since 1850 been again and again visited by items of information respecting the importance of his position and the means of making it more useful and honorable. Scarcely any intelligent parent remains ignorant of the nature of those systems which in sister Colonies and in the New England States have raised up the standard of universal popular instruction. There is now abroad a spirit of inquiry and anxious longing in reference to a new School Law such as this Province has not previously witnessed in the case of any previous Educational measure, and which cannot be gratified till we have in reality and wholly, what we long had nominally or in part, good Schools for the children of our whole population.

For nearly three years the present Superintendent has been ~~weighed down~~ by the weight of a responsibility which he felt could not be fully met by any efforts he could put forth or any sacrifices that he could make. Henceforth he throws this burden from him. He will watch with interest the progress of a School Law through the Legislature, and will be ready to contribute anything that may be useful from the store of facts he has gathered, but the responsibility must now lie wholly on the people themselves and their representatives, who should in this as in other public matters, fully body forth the wishes and capacities of their constituents. Even if all the general measures he has proposed should be rejected, he will console himself for the fruitless result of much thought and labour, by the reflection that he has done what he could, and by that faith in the progress and destinies of his country which assures him that present failure can be but the postponement of results which must ultimately be attained.

Now, however, is the time for exertion on the part of the people. The great questions of Free Schools, trained Teachers and Trustee-representatives for the districts, are balanced on a point, and the weight of a straw may incline them to either side. Let then every parent who values the education of his children, every patriot who desires to

have his country held up her head among her neighbours, every one who has lamented the short-comings of our present Educational system, exert every effort by personal influence and by petition to stimulate and inform the Legislature. Let no time be lost; for though last year the subject lingered through the session as if no one cared for it, it is not unlikely that this year the battle of the Schools will be "short and sharp."

MISTAKES RESPECTING THE PROPOSALS MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION FOR A NEW SCHOOL LAW

Some persons appear to suppose that the Provincial Normal School proposed in the new School Law, is to be supported by assessment. This is entirely an error; the support of that institution is intended to be derived entirely from a Legislative grant. The county assessment is solely for Common and Grammar Schools within the county.

An idea seems also to prevail in some quarters that the choice of Teachers is to be taken from the people, or that no Teachers are to be employed except those trained at the Normal School. On the contrary the choice of the Teachers remains entirely with the Trustees elected by the people, subject of course to the Teacher receiving a license from the Commissioners; and the only advantage possessed by pupils of the Normal School is that their certificate from that institution will be as good as a license.

Another unfounded impression is that there is to be something compulsory in the raising of that part of the Teacher's salary which the district or section has to contribute. The only thing compulsory in this is that if a district neglects to hire a Teacher and establish a School it cannot draw its share of public aid; and of course as there will be two funds, the Provincial Aid and County tax, both will in that case be lost to the district. But the Trustees will be perfectly free in hiring a Teacher, and can offer him precisely the sum authorised by a meeting called for the purpose, which sum will be less than that at present necessary, in so much as the aid drawn through the Commissioners will be double what it is at present. When the Trustees have hired a licensed Teacher, the matter for what salary, they will draw from the Commissioners in proportion to the usual