

THE

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FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

TEACHERS' PROVINCIAL GRANTS.

ELSEWHERE, in the present number, will be found a detailed statement of the moneys paid from the Provincial Treasury to the teachers of Common Schools, employed in the several counties of the province, during the past half-year. This is the first time, so far as we are aware, that such a statement has been made public. At all events, it is the first occasion on which such a statement would not have pained one by the unsatisfactory and unequal state of things it must have brought to light. Under the former mode of distribution a teacher of the first class in one county might receive less from the public grant than a teacher of the second, or even third class, in another. On the present occasion it will be found that a uniform scale has been strictly adhered to for the whole number of teachers engaged in the province. The old fixed grants to counties have given way to the more rational system of dealing directly with the teacher, without reference to the county in which he or she may be employed.

In the list, the teachers are divided into grades, according to the degree of their attainment as represented by their licenses. Male teachers of the first class constitute the "first grade;" female teachers of the first class, and males of the second class, constitute the "second grade;" the examination requirements for both being precisely alike. The "fourth grade" comprises female teachers of the third class. The scale is set by law at \$120, \$90, \$60, and \$15, respectively, for the four grades for the school year. Teachers employed in sections recognized as entitled to special aid as Poor Sections, receive one-third more. A star (*) is prefixed to the name of each who received such additional aid. It will be found that of the teachers employed during the past term, 182 were in sections recognized as Poor, and drawing special aid as such from the County Assessment Fund. It is an eminently wise provision in the Law which gives the greatest assistance where it is most required. It looks to a time when no part of the country, howsoever poor, shall be without adequate provision for education.

The number of prescribed teaching days in the term was 119. It will be noticed that in some cases teachers are stated in the Returns to have been employed more than 119 teaching days during the term. It is needless to say that this could not have occurred, and that the statement was made under a misapprehension as to the scope of the Regulation of Council. In all cases where school commenced late in the term, or closed before the end of April, the number of days, if not reported correctly in the Trustees' Return, was corrected in accordance with the Regulation.

We are informed, on reliable authority, that some grumbling has been heard in certain parts because the Regulation touching holidays has been faithfully carried out. This we are sorry to hear, because we think it a pity that any Nova Scotian School Teacher of this year 1867, should so far forget himself, or herself, as to sigh for the flesh-pots of the old days, when "the service wherein they made them serve was with rigour," and the rewards of the service small. It has been a prime object with the Legislators who enacted the new Law, as well as with the Council charged with overseeing its administration, to raise the teachers of the province to a position in keeping with the responsible duties they have to perform. It was believed that by giving them every Saturday as a day of rest and recreation, both their efficiency as teachers and their happiness as men and women, would be greatly increased. Long experience has established the fact that a teacher can effect higher results, and with less danger to his own health and that of his pupils, by teaching five days during the week, than by teaching six. In the light of this knowledge, every Saturday has been prescribed as a holiday in all our public schools. This, we had hoped, would commend itself to the whole body of teachers throughout the country, as a great and valuable boon conferred upon them, and it is satisfactory

to know that by most of them it is so regarded. We invite the attention of those who think less favourably of the matter to a few pertinent considerations in connexion with it.

And in the first place let us say that the present Legislative Grant is the highest which can be given: in the aggregate it is a good deal higher than ever has been given heretofore in the province. It is not a grant of a certain sum per day, but of a *fixed allowance for the school-term*. It is provided that portions of the term are to be paid for at the same rate as the full term grant gives for each teaching day in the term. That is, the number of teaching days in the term fixes the rate per day, instead of the rate per day fixing the amount for the term.

The salary from the Trustees is also by law a stipulated amount for the school year or term, and not a rate per day.

These things being so the question comes, How many days during the year or term shall a teacher be required to teach, in order to become entitled to the grant and local salary in full? If every week-day is made a teaching day, then school must be kept every week-day in the term, or the full salary cannot be claimed. Take the last term for example. The number of working days it embraced was 155. Now if it were admitted that each day of the 155 was a proper day for school work, then in order to become entitled to the local salary, and the Provincial Grant in full, a teacher must have been at his post in the school-room 155 days during the term. For each of any less number of days he would have received the one-hundred-and-fifty-fifth part of the term's salary. Thus, suppose a teacher of the first grade had agreed to teach in a section for \$400 per annum from the Trustees. This with the public grant would have given a salary of \$260.00 for the term. Suppose that from any cause he lost one month, or a sixth part of the term, 26 days. The rate per day of his salary, supposing every week-day to be a teaching day, would have been, from the Trustees \$1.29 and from the public grant \$50.00, nearly, in all, \$216.50.

The Council of Public Instruction decides that every Saturday shall be a school-holiday, and that eight days (not counting Saturdays) at Christmas shall be given as vacation. That is, the number of days a teacher was required to teach in order to draw a full salary, was cut down to 119. He got every Saturday for recreation, and a fair vacation at Christmas, without diminution of salary. We presume no one who taught the full term complained of this arrangement as a hardship. The only one who is likely to murmur is the teacher who failed to get a school at the beginning of the term, or, from any other cause, lost a portion of the prescribed teaching time. A few, let us hope very few, in this position, would like, by over-taxing their own strength and that of their pupils with a continuous strain of work every day in the week, to make up the requisite number of 119 days' teaching, in order to draw a full salary. But a little reflection must convince every such teacher that the Law against which he murmurs not only does him no injustice, but actually seeks to prevent his doing an injustice to himself. If it is recognized as a proper thing that a teacher should do six days' work a week, without intermission, then this principle must be made of universal application. In other words, teachers must be required to teach six days in the week, or else lose a portion of their salary. We have seen that if this principle had been applied to a male teacher of the first class during the last term, he would have received from the public grant for five months (129 days) of teaching, \$50.00. But by the Regulation touching Holidays and Vacations, the number of teaching days in that term was cut down to 119. Suppose a teacher lost the entire month of February, which embraced 29 teaching days, or a fraction over one-sixth of the teaching days in the term. The Regulation does not allow him to teach six days a week for the rest of the term, in order to make up for this lost time.