

ment House. Circumstances shortly occurred which necessitated its removal. It was decided to erect new and appropriate buildings. The corner stone of the present Toronto Normal School was laid by Lord Elgin in July, 1851, on which occasion Dr. Ryerson said that one of the four circumstances "which encourage the most sanguine anticipations in every patriotic heart in regard to our educational future, is the precedence which our Legislature has taken of all others on the western side of the Atlantic, in providing for Normal School instruction, and in aiding teachers to avail themselves of its advantages." It must be matter of deep regret to the patriot that our Province, which so nobly led the van in 1850 on this side the Atlantic, is now so far in the rear of many of her neighbors in providing "Normal School instruction." Over 4,000 of Ontario's teachers actually engaged are Third-Class or old County Board licentiates! In September, 1876, the Ottawa Normal School was opened. Thus while Ontario has two Normal Schools, the State of Ohio has 11; the State of Illinois, with one third the area of Ontario, and a population of only two and a half millions, has 10; Massachusetts, with a population 200,000 less than ours, has 7; and Vermont, with a population of only about 300,000, has 3.

But do the Normal Schools we have properly perform the functions for which such institutions are established? It appears not. Dr. Ryerson states that "our Normal and Model Schools were not designed to educate young persons, but to train teachers, both theoretically and practically." Dr. Sangster, a former Head Master, acknowledging the digression in the work of the Normal School from its original purpose, excuses it on the ground of necessity in the following terms:—"This institution is designed to train Common School teachers, so as to fit them for the more efficient discharge of their varied and important duties. Though essentially a training school, rather than a mere school of instruction, in the ordinary sense of the term, the majority of those received as students-in-training are so deficient in scholastic attainments that it is found necessary to include in its course of instruction not merely discussions on the principles of education and methods of teaching, but also the actual teaching of most, or all, the branches of Common School study. 'To teach well we must be possessed of adequate knowledge;' and as more than nine-tenths of those who apply for admission do not possess anything like that amount of information and general knowledge which the advancing spirit of the age very properly demand of those who would become educators of youth, the Normal School masters are compelled to supplement, by lectures on the different branches of study embraced in an ordinary English education, the early training, or want of training, of those who enter its walls. Every lecture, therefore, given in the Normal School is delivered with a two-fold object:—

1st. To convey to the class of students-in-training a certain amount of information on the subject on which it treats; and

2nd. To give this information in such a manner, that making the necessary allowance for differences of age and attainments, it may serve as a model of the method in which the same subject is to be discussed before a class of children.

The circumstances described by Dr. Sangster still exist, perhaps in a more exaggerated form, seeing that the length of the session has been doubled,

consequently a large proportion of the work done at our Normal Schools is not real Normal School work. The meagre provision at hand is thus so heavily impeded that the mere increase of schools keeps apace with the supply of trained teachers. It is readily seen that a great multiplication of such Normal Schools as those at present established would be needed to overtake the deficiency. The remarks of the Minister of Education on this point are important:—"On all hands there is but one opinion that schools should be placed under qualified trained teachers. It is difficult to devise or suggest a remedy for meeting this demand. During the past seven years the ranks of the teachers have been recruited at the rate of from 1500 to 1800 per annum. Our Normal Schools have accommodation for only 250. We find then how few trained teachers there can be. It is throwing money away to place our schools in the hands of untrained Third-Class teachers. Ladies would naturally not remain long in the profession, the average had been about two and a half years. It is safe to assume that the average time of male and female teachers is not more than three and a half years. In view of these facts it may be estimated that it would require fifteen more Normal Schools to meet the demand; but for this we are scarcely ready."

Several answers have been proposed. Some think that the appointment of peripatetic conductors of institutes, whose duty it would be to go from county to county and meet with teachers on whom it would be compulsory to attend, would meet the difficulty under question. As has been explained, the provinces of the institute and Normal Schools are not coincident, but even if they were it is not advisable that the schools should be subjected to interruptions of a week, two or three times a year. Institutes held, as is usually the case at present, on a Friday and succeeding Saturday, would be altogether too short to accomplish substantial reform. Another proposition has been to utilize High Schools and Collegiate Institutes to train teachers. In fact, as it is, the profession draws largely from the class of High School graduates. Experience proves that some of these High School pupils have been taught method as well as matter yet many appear to have been unfitted for an ungraded school through not having had the opportunity of seeing and hearing elementary teaching, or not having been taught how to teach the rudiments of knowledge. What our High Schools could do and should do is to relieve our Normal Schools of the academic work they are at present compelled to do, and leave the training to specially appointed training masters on whom we could rely.

The most practical and efficient remedy to meet the greatest defect in our educational system is the establishment of real Normal and Model Schools, not combined training and academic colleges such as those excellent institutions in Toronto and Ottawa, of which we need one or two more to raise the tone of education and prepare Normal and Model School masters. The idea is not novel. It is the same as was embodied in the resolution of the Hastings' Convention and other teachers' associations. For example, take an average town school, having accommodation for four teachers. In consideration of the advantage to the town, one of the rooms could generally be secured for a Normal School room, a master might be selected, and appointed by the Minister of Education for the special purpose of training aspiring educators.