

RESULTS OF ARBOR DAY.

Inspector I. B. Oakes contributes an article to the *Woodstock Press* giving some results of the observance of Arbor Day this year throughout New Brunswick. In his own district, which embraces York and the greater part of Carleton, over 2,000 trees were planted, in addition to 1,600 set out in 1886. This is a total of over 3,500 trees, which, with planting shrubs, laying out of flower beds, clearing the school grounds of rubbish and fencing them, and a thorough cleaning of school houses, show excellent results.

Inspector Mersereau, who traverses Restigouche, Gloucester and Northumberland counties, states that the teachers and trustees were very enthusiastic in their efforts, and though he had not at the time added together the results, he thought that some thousands of trees had for the first time been planted on the school grounds of this large inspectorate; also many shrubs and flowers; while in nearly every case the school house was cleaned, and other improvements made upon the school premises.

Inspectors Smith, Wetmore and Carter report a large number of trees planted in their districts, and also that school grounds have been greatly improved and ornamented. In addition to these practical results of Arbor Day, the attention of parents and children throughout the Province has been directed to this subject, and a most commendable spirit aroused on the subject of tree culture and preservation. Let this spirit be fostered in all possible ways, and let special pains be taken this fall to protect for the winter what has already been accomplished with so much zeal and enthusiasm.

AN EXISTING EVIL.

Inspector McLellan, of Pictou, writes in his report to the Superintendent of Education:

Evidences of progress and efficiency of management are generally in inverse ratio to the frequency of changes of teachers. It is rare to meet with a school in which the same teacher is employed for the second term or for a longer period, without noting substantial progress. I do not hesitate to assert that, as far as my observation extends, the greatest single retarding cause in our schools is the frequent change of teachers. I could point to scores of schools in which I have been unable to bring about any appreciable improvement in classification, owing to this cause alone. During the winter term of the past year, 78 teachers removed to new sections and 36 were new teachers; in the summer term 77 removed and 19 new teachers were employed. That is to say, 114 schools in winter and 96 in summer were presided over by teachers who had to acquire their first experimental knowledge of the schools under their charge during

these terms. When we consider that, of the 221 teachers employed in the winter, and 237 in summer, in this district, 70 were employed in graded schools where engagements are, as a rule, much more permanent, we are able to form an estimate of the extent in which changes are made from term to term in our miscellaneous schools. I do not over-estimate the number when I say that in two out of every three of the country schools in this district a new teacher is employed each term. Some remedy should certainly be devised for this evil. The only adequate one that suggests itself to me is to do away with the two term system and substitute a single term of ten months. Any disadvantages incident upon this change would, in my humble opinion, be more than counterbalanced by the increased efficiency arising from the continuous services of teachers for such a period. Some of the advantages that would, I think, result from the change are: (1) Increased annual attendance of pupils. Much time is lost in the latter part of each term by intending pupils postponing the date of their entrance till the beginning of the new term. This is especially true of the summer term. Our academies and high schools lose at least 50 per cent. of their attendance from summer vacation to November 1st. (2) Increased efficiency of inspection. With the large districts now placed under the supervision of each inspector, and the corresponding quantity of clerical work necessitated, the time remaining for the actual work of inspection is short. With an annual term the office work would be very materially lessened, allowing more time for visitation. (3) It would avoid the loss of at least weeks of effective work and, as already pointed out, would give much better educational results for the year in those schools where, under the present system, changes are made every term. (4) It would afford teachers more time in which to secure situations, and trustees both better opportunity and additional motive for making judicious selections.

The adoption of a single term would not preclude a change of teachers during the year where necessary. The great desideratum is to make yearly engagements the rule. Payments of government grant and county fund would, of course, have to be made semi-annually. All the data necessary for the first half yearly payment would be a statement of the number of days taught, and the grand total days' attendance made in each school, attested by the teacher as in the case of the annual return. The Government grant and County Fund sheets to be filled by Inspectors at end of each term would require two additional columns, one for the "Amount paid at end of half term," and the second for "Balance due Teacher or Trustees." Any error in the half-yearly statement would thus be corrected at the end of the term. The dates for the opening and closing of a yearly term that would suit the majority of the schools in this district are, I think, the middle of September and the middle of July.

Our experience leads us strongly to endorse Inspector MacLellan's views. There are two sides to the question, we are aware, but the one term system for the year, with perhaps three sub-terms, we are strongly inclined to think a better arrangement than the present one in Nova Scotia.