

(2). To see that the general principles of the law, as well as the objects of its appropriations, are, in no instance, contravened.

(3). To prepare the regulations which relate to the general character and management of the Schools, and the qualifications and character of the Teachers,—leaving the employment of them to the people, and a large discretion as to modes of teaching.

(4). To provide, or recommend books, the catalogue of which may enable Trustees or Committees to select suitable ones for the use of their Schools.

(5). To prepare and recommend suitable plans of School-houses, and their furniture and appendages, as one of the most important subsidiary means of good schools—a subject upon which it is intended on a future occasion, to present a Special Report.

(6). To employ every constitutional means to excite a spirit of intellectual activity and inquiry, and to satisfy it as far as possible by aiding in the establishment and selection of libraries, and other means of diffusing useful knowledge.

(7). Finally, and especially, to see that an efficient system of inspection is exercised over all the Schools. This involves the examination and licensing of Teachers,—visiting the Schools,—discovering errors, and suggesting remedial measures to the organization, classification, and methods of teaching in the Schools,—giving counsel and instruction as to their management,—carefully examining the pupils,—animating Teachers, trustees and parents, by conversations, addresses, &c., whenever practicable, imparting vigor by every available means to the whole system. What the Government is to the system, and what the Teacher is to the School, the local Inspector or Superintendent should be within the limits of his District.

There is no class of officers in the whole machinery of elementary instruction on whom so much depends for its efficient and successful working, as upon the local Superintendents or Inspectors. The proper selection of this class of agents is a matter of the greatest importance; they should make themselves theoretically and practically acquainted with every branch taught in the Schools, and the best modes of teaching, as well as with the whole subject of School organization and management.

Where there is incompetency or negligence here, there is weakness in the very part where strength is most required. I think this part of the system of Public Instruction is by no means appreciated in this Province in proportion to its importance.

The laws, and Normal and Elementary Schools of Germany and France, would be of comparatively little avail, were it not for their system of inspection over every School and over every department of instruction; nor would the Privy Council Committee in England, or the National Board in Ireland, succeed as they do, were it not for the corps of able and vigilant Inspectors, whom they employ to see carried into effect in every School aided by public grants, the principles of the system, and the lessons given in the Normal Schools.

Holland is inferior to Prussia in its system of Normal Schools; but is probably superior to every other country in the world, in its system of inspection.

With some of these Inspectors it was my good fortune to meet in Holland; they accompanied me to

various Schools under their charge; their entrance into the Schools was welcomed by the glowing countenances of both Teachers and pupils, who seemed to regard and receive them as friends from whom they expected both instruction and encouragement; nor were their expectations disappointed so far as I had an opportunity of judging; the examinations and remarks in each instance shewed the Inspector to be intimately acquainted with every department of the instruction given, and imparted animation and delight to the whole School. The importance attached to this class of officers, may be inferred from the remark of the venerable Vanden Ende (late Chief Commissioner of Primary Instruction, in Holland, and to a great extent the founder of the System) to M. Cousin, in 1836, "Be careful in the choice of your Inspectors; they are men who ought to be sought for with a lantern in the hand."

In the commencement of a system of Public Instruction, the office of local Superintendents or Inspectors is, if possible, more important, than after such system has been brought into full operation; and little hope of success can be entertained in this Province, wherever local Superintendents prove lax or careless in their examinations into the qualifications and character of Candidates for teaching*—their visitations of Schools—their attention to books and defective modes of teaching—their exertions to carry every part of the law into effect, and to excite increased interest in the public mind in behalf of the education of the young.

This last is the more important as no Constitutional Government can establish and render effective a system of Public Instruction without the co-operation of the people themselves.

There must be this co-operation, not only in the enactment of laws, but in the application of them to every individual School. The establishment and maintenance of a School system is not like the digging of a Canal, or the building of a Railroad, where the work may be performed by strangers and foreigners. The subjects of popular education are the younger, and the immediate and necessary agents of it are the older inhabitants of the country; and if the latter are indifferent and unfaithful to their duty, the former will grow up in ignorance, notwithstanding the provisions of the best laws, and the best exertions of the Government.

One of the first steps then in a public work of this kind—a work which involves the interests of every family, and the future destinies of the country;—is to excite parents and guardians to a sense of their moral and social obligations not only in respect to the establishment of Schools, but as to the character and efficiency of those Schools, and the due education of their children for the present and the future—for themselves, and their country.

These remarks suggest a collateral subject to which I desire to draw attention—not with a view of recommending its adoption, but in order to impress upon all concerned the principle which it involves. I

* "The most imperfect arrangement for providing Teachers is that which requires an examination into, merely the knowledge of the Candidate in the branches to be taught. This is specially imperfect in the case of elementary instruction, where the knowledge required is small in amount, and where the art of teaching finds its most difficult exercise. The erroneous notion, that an individual can teach whatever he knows, is now generally abandoned; and in those countries which still adhere to the old method, of depending solely upon examinations for securing competent Teachers, examination is made, not only of the requirements of the Candidate, but of his ability to give instruction."—Bache's Report on Education in Europe, p. 323.