

within his reach, deliver his instructions orally. He should give prominence, according to the stage of advancement of his pupils, to the political and civil constitution of the Dominion, and of the Province of Ontario. In the Fourth Class, the pupils are expected to learn the most important facts in English History, to understand clearly what each one of them was, and know why it is considered important. No details are to be learnt except those which have a bearing on such facts. For instance, as the great fact in the history of the sixteenth century is the struggle between King and Parliament, it is not necessary to pay much attention, in this class to the reign of James I., or any to such events as the Great Plague, the Great Fire in London, or the Massacre of Glencoe. Very little time should be spent on the period before the Norman Conquest; and the dates committed to memory should be few and important.

The same principles should govern the Teacher in dealing with European History in the Fifth Class, and with the Stuart period in the Sixth. He should always remember that a comprehension of leading facts and general principles is more valuable than the most accurate knowledge of details, if unaccompanied by ability to distinguish what is important from what is not.

Throughout the course, the Teacher should bear in mind the interesting and valuable lessons that may be deduced from the lives of the men and women who have played a prominent part in history.

Hygiene.—By reference to the Programme, it will be observed that Hygiene, or the science of the laws of Health, is to be taught, not from text-books but by familiar lectures. All the pupils in the 4th, 5th and 6th classes, should be made to listen to the lectures on this subject.

Morals.—No text-book in Christian Morals, nor any specific instructions in that subject, have been prescribed. The Teacher, however, will grievously fail in his duty unless the whole tenor and tone of his instructions in the school-room, and his deportment generally, be not only consistent with the ordinary proprieties of life, but also characterized by a high moral tone. To his pupils he sets a standard of conduct; they insensibly learn his ways of speaking and acting; and any carelessness on his part may do lasting injury to their plastic minds. His business being to form their characters as well as to develop their moral faculties, he should habitually strive to make and to improve opportunities of stamping good and deep impressions upon them.

MEMORANDUM ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

A deputation from a Special Committee of the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto met me on the 16th inst., on the subject of Religious Instruction in Public Schools. I explained to the deputation my views of the Law and Regulations upon the subject, but its importance in connection with what was sought by the Reverend Mr. Langtry in our personal interview, as well as in his letter to me of the 14th inst., requires that I should give a formal statement of the position of this Department, and of School Boards and Trustees under the Law and Regulations which govern us.

The question raised by this Committee is expressed in the Rev. Mr. Langtry's letter, to be as follows:—

"Our Committee desire to confer with you as to the possibility of making it a matter of regulation, that the clergy of any persuasion should have the right, provided accommodation can be provided, of giving religious instruction in the schools during one hour in the week."

The general regulations for the Public Schools which are now in force, were the result of years of experience, and were carefully considered and adopted by the late Council of Public Instruction, newly constituted under the Act of 1874, and the Regulations on the subject of Religious Exercises and Religious Instruction are, especially, framed with great practical wisdom. When all the difficulties which attend the religious question in a free, and non-denominational system of popular education, are understood, I doubt whether it was possible to have formed regulations which could have more successfully overcome these difficulties.

These regulations provide for what is literally asked for by the Committee, as expressed in the Rev. Mr. Langtry's letter, as will be seen from Regulations, No. IV., the text of which is as follows:—

IV.—WEEKLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION BY THE CLERGY OF EACH PERSUASION.

1. In order to correct misapprehension, and define more closely the rights and duties of trustees and other parties in regard to religious instruction in connection with the Public Schools, it is decided by the Council of Public Instruction that the clergy of any persuasion, or their authorized representatives, shall have the right to

give religious instructions to the pupils of their own church, in each school-house, at least once a week, after the hour of four o'clock in the afternoon; and if the clergy of more than one persuasion apply to give religious instruction in the same school-house, the trustees shall decide on what day of the week the school-house shall be at the disposal of the clergyman of each persuasion, at the time above stated. But it shall be lawful for the trustees and clergyman of any denomination to agree upon any hour of the day at which a clergyman, or his authorized representative, may give religious instruction to the pupils of his own church, provided it be not during the regular hours of the school.

But upon obtaining from Mr. Langtry personally a more definite expression, I found that this Regulation would not accomplish what was sought by the Committee.

By Religious Instruction, the Committee meant instruction of a denominational character, involving necessarily religious catechisms, formularies, or views distinctive of particular denominations; and although under Regulation, No. IV., this kind of instruction is permitted after the regular hour for closing the school, and accommodation in the school is provided for the purpose, the Committee's proposition was that the religious instruction of this denominational nature should become, and be part of the regular school exercises, within ordinary school hours, that it should be carried out punctually by the clergymen of each denomination instructing in the school, while the other exercises were going on, such of the pupils whose parents belonged to that denomination—and these pupils would to that extent be thus withdrawn from the regular classes of instruction in the school.

I explained to the deputation that as I construed the law, this Department had no authority to pass such a regulation, and that although jurisdiction was conferred by the School Act of 1874, (see section 142) upon the Department to frame general regulations so as to allow of pupils receiving such religious instruction as their parents might desire, the letter and spirit of the Act were against the Department's assuming to introduce religious instruction of a denominational character, as one of the ordinary exercises of the school, and as such to be imperatively enforced—that the Act made the parent and not the Department, or the School Board, or Trustees, the judge upon the question—that the Department could only properly recommend religious exercises for use in the schools by the trustees and master, with the approval of the parents; and that, so far as the clergy sought opportunity for availing themselves of the Fourth Regulation, the School Boards and Trustees, as the managers of their schools under the law, were the proper bodies to apply to, and not this Department.

My interpretation also of any religious instruction contemplated by the Act was against its being of any distinctive denominational character, and that in this the position of our Public Schools was similar to elementary schools under School Boards in England, under the 14th Section of the Act of 1870, which expressly provides "no religious catechism or religious formularies which are distinctive of any particular denomination, shall be taught in the school."

Under this Section, the School Board for London have passed the following resolutions with reference to religious instructions, prayers, and hymns, in schools provided by them:—

"1. That in the Schools provided by the Board, the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanation and such instructions therefrom in the principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of children; provided always (a) that in such explanations and instructions the provisions of the Act in sections 7 and 14 be strictly observed, both in letter and in spirit, and that no attempt be made in any such schools to attach children to any particular denomination; (b) that in regard to any particular school, the Board shall consider and determine upon any application by managers, parents, or ratepayers of the district, who may show special cause for exemption of the school from the operation of this resolution, in whole or in part.

"2. That such explanations and instructions as are recognised by the foregoing resolution shall be given by the responsible teachers of the school.

"3. That in accordance with the general practice of existing elementary schools, provision may be made for offering prayer and using hymns in schools provided by the Board at the 'time or times' when, according to section 7, sub-section 2, of the Elementary Education Act, 'religious observances' may be 'practised.'

"4. That the arrangements for such 'religious observances' be left to the discretion of the teacher and managers of each school, with the right of appeal to the Board by teachers, managers, parents, or ratepayers of the district; provided always that, in the offering of any prayers and of the use of any hymns, the provisions of the Act in sections 7 and 14 be strictly observed, both in letter and in spirit, and that no attempt be made to attach children to any particular denomination.