

phonic system has shown the feasibility of a change, by the great success of its pupils; when both England and America are marching forward together in the direction of a radical change; when the Canadians, heretofore slow in taking up this question, are now in line with the leaders of the movement on both Continents; when our school system is undergoing, at the hands of the Governmental authorities, a process of simplification with the view of rendering our national education more practical; when these facts exist, and those events have happened, and are happening, we think the time is ripe for the change of our spelling system.

Is such a change practicable? This question can be answered by pointing to the change made in our National currency. Canadians now no longer count pounds, shillings, pence, groats, farthings; in our grandfathers' time they counted nothing else. It was a radical revolution; but it was accomplished without rebellion or bloodshed. It was in some respects a more serious change than that now contemplated. It affected every one. The old had to learn another system of calculation, or run the risk of being cheated. The young required to master both systems—because both old and new systems ran consecutively for a time, as both systems of spelling would. The change in calculating currency came about by National proclamation; the change in spelling will come about by the local Governmental authorities "authorizing" the new method.

It may be objected that the spelling reformers are not themselves agreed as to which system is preferable; and the objector may endeavor to secure a postponement by requiring such agreement preliminary to the change of the school curriculum. The answer to this is brief: Let the various systems be submitted to the Central Committee, or Council of Public Instruction, as the various school books are submitted. Let the learned gentlemen of the committee impartially investigate the merits of each, and then decide to "authorize" the best.

The spelling reform movement should be national in its character; and it should begin in the schools, so that it may have

as fair a chance as the present method has had. There need be nothing compulsory about the matter. Let the local teacher or school board introduce or not, as he or they please, the "authorized" system—or any or either of them, if more than one. Let the scholars study either the old system or the new, as they or their parents prefer. Let the new system stand on its own merits. Let it be used in all documents—examination papers, etc.—by those pupils who learn it; and let those who prefer the old way go on blundering.

How many scholars can spell perfectly according to present orthographic rules (!)? How many teachers? If the proportion of scholars be as one to fifty—a liberal percentage—why should the forty-nine lose marks and merits by failure to do what cannot be done except by those who possess extraordinary powers of memory? The purpose of examinations is not—or should not be—to exhibit precocity and develop prodigies; the purpose of examinations is—or should be—to test the progress of the pupils, keeping in mind their opportunities, capacity, heredity, sex, and all other points of differentiation between one and another which may affect the judgment of the examiner. Is a spelling-bee a fair test of education or capacity? If so, why are the schools not doing their work? If not—and every one will admit it is not—why virtually make it so by requiring scholars to spell arbitrarily or suffer in consequence?

Let progressive teachers, enlightened parents, and suffering scholars, petition the Educational authorities of the Province to relax the siringent rule which now makes Johnsonian spelling compulsory in class and in examinations. If the Minister of Education grant the prayer of the petition, the key of the position is gained; if he does not, the question will then come up for argument, and the spelling reformers are sure to win. We incline to the opinion that the petition would be signed and supported by leading educationists throughout Ontario; and further, that the Minister of Education would go a considerable length in the direction of the proposed reform. As for parents and scholars, they would not shrink from setting their signatures to such a petition from a groundless fear entertained by some that the etymology of the language would suffer by the granting of the prayer.