

Writing in Halifax Schools.

A very large meeting of the Halifax and Dartmouth teachers was held on Friday, the 2nd ult., to consider the report of the committee on writing. The report was read and explained by Principal Miller of Dartmouth. The other teachers manifested their interest by asking many questions, all of which were satisfactorily answered by the various members of the committee.

The chairman of the school board, Mr. Symons, addressed the meeting. As a man of business for many years he had frequent opportunities of becoming practically acquainted with the results of the penmanship of the schools, and he must pronounce it very unsatisfactory. As a bank director he had frequently to reject, on account of their bad writing, candidates otherwise well suited for positions in the bank. It was to be regretted that a worthy young man's progress should be barred by his teacher's neglect in keeping him up to the standard in the legible, neat and facile use of the pen. In visiting schools for the last two years he had discovered two causes for this general defect: 1st the use of short pencils, and 2nd, the haste to get the correct answers to problems regardless of form. He had reason to believe that in the Boston schools writing is more efficiently taught than in Nova Scotia. He advocated the use of writing exercises to secure freedom of arm movement in place of finger movements.

After hearing several written opinions the majority of the teachers endorsed the following propositions:

1. Instead of slates pupils should use exercise books. They would be noiseless; the work would remain for inspection or reference; being permanent more care would be exercised; and the cost would not much, if any, exceed that of slates.
2. Pupils when writing should sit in the right central position; both arms on the desks at an angle of 45° with the front of the desk, writing lines parallel to the front of the desk.
3. Vertical writing is the best—being the most legible, the most easily learned, the best adapted to secure the hygienic position. It is the most used in English schools—in nine-tenths of them—and in many schools on the continent. It is recommended by German experts.
4. In normally shaped hands pens should be held as recommended by Gage in his system of penmanship.
5. Pupils when writing should be required to be always in correct position and to hold their penholders or pencils correctly. Writing exercises should not be so long as to become tiresome.
6. Writing should be taught chiefly from the blackboard and by the use of exercise paper and movable head lines.
7. No haste to get through with much work should cause the teacher to tolerate any written exercise which is not in good form.

"I am well satisfied with your paper, and think there is a steady advance in its utility to teachers."—S.

TALKS WITH TEACHERS.

I was talking with an inspector a day or two ago, who seemed to be put out about something. On inquiry I found that it was caused by his having to send out so many return sheets a second time for the term. He informed me that in many cases where he sent returns to the secretary, the teacher would write for them; and where he sent them to the teacher, the secretary would write for them, and in both cases without inquiring of each other. It is the same in the case of registers—only, perhaps, worse. One register, ordinarily, will do for two terms, or a year. During that time there is a change of teacher, and the last one, instead of leaving the unfilled register with the secretary, or in the school, carries it away with her to make out the return and neglects to send it back. The new teacher, wishing to begin with a clean sheet, or not inquiring whether the district is supplied or not, immediately writes the inspector for a new register, which she gets oftener than it is required, because, perhaps, the inspector is away and the sender cannot determine.

Before sending for a new register always examine the *last* one and inquire of the secretary. If the secretary has not a new register and the *last* one is full, then send to the inspector, not to the education office, as some do. Such a course pleases not the inspector nor the education office. At his visit the inspector takes note of the supplies needed. If he fails to send them to any school it is because he has had no opportunity of knowing they are needed.

The work of another new year has begun. Let each teacher determine to accomplish something more for herself and her school than last year. What can she do for herself? She can increase her scholarship, improve her methods, read an educational paper, attend a county institute, which perhaps she did not do last year. What can she do for her school? She can inspire her pupils with higher ideals, morally and intellectually. She can awaken a deeper interest in education in the district, among parents as well as pupils. She can have some object in view beyond the mere drawing of the salary and filling in the time. A school flag, a school library, better apparatus, improved house, grounds or furniture. Let every teacher and school be the better for the year 1893.

We have seen a very pretty photograph of the Sydney Academy, surrounded by the vignettes of the senior classes and the teachers. We presume it is going to be a part of the academic exhibit at the Chicago world's fair.