

the pupils, but the rudiments of a few subjects, that they may, in after-life, become able to acquire a mastery of one or more departments of science. The radical changes that have taken place during the last score of years, and are now engaging the attention of the leaders of advanced thought, are largely in the direction of arriving at more enlightened methods of teaching the mass of the people how they can best train the rising generation to act their parts well upon this busy stage of life. For becoming familiar with those methods, it cannot reasonably be expected that any text-book should contain much information. It is mainly to be acquired by coming in contact with those leaders through the instrumentality of educational magazines, lectures, essays, etc.

Under existing regulations, the Education Department controls the class of text-books to be used in the schools by authorizing those giving evidence of being fitted for promoting the welfare of the pupils, or by withholding its sanction if not so regarded. So long as the Government invests that function in the Department will there be uniformity. Whether that ought to cease, and each series of text-books ought to stand or fall upon its own merits, is a question not easy to determine. The American system throws some light upon it. To enumerate all the Readers, Spellers, Grammars, Geographies, etc., that have been introduced into the schools of some of the Western States during the last twenty years, and discarded after a trial of a few years, would be a tedious task. Suffice it to say, that it not unfrequently happens that three and four different Readers are found in a school of less than forty pupils. A similar state of things exists with regard to Arithmetics, etc. No doubt each series has some new feature of excellence not found in the others. But do results show that, in consequence of those frequent changes, the attainments of the pupils there are superior to those here? There the school directors and teacher determine what books shall be introduced. A cursory observation at once shows that the average trustee in Ontario is a person not specially qualified to decide upon the merits of a text-book, even if it be but a First Reader. It is not assuming too much to say that the average Western school director is not possessed of a higher grade of intelligence than the average Ontario trustee. It can be readily inferred to what extent the best interests of the schools would be subserved if the trustees and teachers would have the selection of the text-books in their hands. If that power were delegated to the Inspector and trustees, the Inspector would often find his most sincere efforts misconstrued. Then, if the frequent changes of teachers and trustees, and the removal of parents from one section of the country to another, be taken into consideration, an opinion can be formed whether or not the Department should continue to authorize all the text-books, and retain uniformity throughout the Province. There are localities in which