

Many had thought that he did not go far enough in this matter. They thought that Parliament should legislate directly upon the subject, and make it penal to neglect the sending children to school. But his opinion was that as each municipality provided the means of education, so should each municipality have the right to deal with the subject. It was proper, however, to remark that it was not intended to require the parent to send his child to the public Protestant or Roman Catholic school. All that was essential was that the child must be educated, and the education might take place at home, with the mother as the instructor, as was the case with the celebrated John Wesley and his brothers and sisters, who received their early education from their mother. It was asked, how the plan was to be carried out. He replied that he left it to each municipal council to say how it was to be done. If in townships a by-law were past declaring that the parent who did not send his children, from seven to twelve years of age, to any school for four months in the year, such parent should pay a double rate-bill, and they might depend upon it, the neglect to take advantage of the school system would only prevail in solitary instances. In other cases, it had been suggested that it would be well if Municipal Councils were invested with the power of punishing parents, unable to pay fine, by compelling them to work upon the roads. The punishment would act as a sort of pillory; by which they would be held up to public scorn and opprobrium, and thus they might be compelled to do their duty when they could not be got at in any other way. It had also been suggested that this law should apply to the parents of children between seven and twelve or seven and fifteen years of age. All agreed that four months in the year ought to be the minimum time for which a child between those ages ought to be sent to school.

TOWNSHIP BOARDS OF EDUCATION.

Another question which was attracting a good deal of interest was, whether it would not be better to have a Board of education for every Township. This subject deserved great attention. The division of Townships into school sections might have been advisable at the commencement of the school system, but was not compatible with the advanced condition of the country. Such a state of affairs prevented combination and harmony, under it the schools as a whole drooped and never rose or progressed. This system of having different Boards for each School Section had been done away with in cities in 1860, and since then the results had been most gratifying. In Toronto there had used to be no less than sixteen school sections, and in the city of Hamilton probably eight or ten with corresponding expenses for teachers, management, &c. It was now proposed to follow the same course in regard to townships. At present there were very generally too many schools in a township. A less number of a more efficient character would be more useful, and might be had without any increased expenditure. At present persons living in a school section were compelled to send their children to the Schools belonging to their section, although it might be much more convenient to them if residents on the boundary of the section to send them to one of the other schools in the township.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND ECONOMY OF THE TOWNSHIP SYSTEM.

Both systems had been tried in the States. In the cities of Boston New Haven, Hartford and New York, they had had excellent schools but it had been found that in country places the schools under the sectional system were not progressive. The Americans felt that this was the case and had turned their attention to it, and they had for the most part arrived at the conclusion that these small divisions had been the cause, and the consequence had been that they had commenced gradually to introduce the Township system instead of School Sections or Districts as they were termed in the States. It might be urged that the Eastern States were old settlements, and were thickly peopled, and were, therefore, no criterions for us to go by; but in Indiana, Ohio and other Western States, the same difficulties had been found to exist under the old system, and the Township system was being gradually introduced. Dr. Ryerson was anxious to adopt anything in the educational system of America or any other country that was worthy of imitation and profiting by their experience in the matter he had thought it right to bring in question before the people, as he was not willing to introduce any changes or innovations until he was well assured that the public desired it whatever might be his individual private opinions on the subject. The following was an extract, from the report, of the secretary of the Board of Education, for 1866 in the State of Massachusetts, on this subject. The Connecticut Legislature had lately passed a law to do away with the School Districts, and put the control of the schools of a township under one Board of Trustees, the object of the measure being (as stated) to simplify the machinery of the educational system, and to facilitate and bring about a more simple and efficient mode of education. The Superintendent of Education in the State of Pennsylvania in his recent report had said that the "crowning glory" of their school system was the Township system.

The State of Ohio had testified to the same effect, and so had Indiana. Under the present system of sections in this Country the attendance at some of the schools did not average more than ten or twelve, while others were overcrowded. Schools were much more likely to be good and efficient when there was a large attendance. The pupils and teachers were both influenced. From the educational report of the State of Massachusetts it appeared that under the District system there were twenty-five schools where there was an average attendance of only five pupils, 205 schools with an average of ten pupils, 540 schools with 15 pupils, 1,000 schools with twenty pupils, and 1,456 with an average attendance of twenty-five. It was quite clear from this statement that a much smaller number of schools would have accommodated the wants of the population, while the expense would be proportionally decreased.

EVILS OF THE PRESENT SCHOOL SECTION SYSTEM.*

Under the sectional system persons were compelled to send their children to the school belonging to the section, although very often another school might be nearer and more desirable, and hence not unfrequently they were prevented from sending their children to school at all. But so long as arbitrary lines existed they should of course be respected. An anecdote was related by Dr. Ryerson of a gentleman having met with a farmer in the States and asking him the road to the school house belonging to the district in which he resided. The farmer replied that he scarcely knew where the school house was, as it was so far away, and the road was so bad that he derived no benefit from it. On being informed that a new system had been inaugurated and that he could now send his children to any school he pleased, his countenance brightened, and he replied that he "would send them to school to-morrow." Another man came to the County Treasurer to pay his taxes, who stated that he lived in a remote corner of the township, and found it absolutely impossible to send his children to school, although he lived near by the school of an adjoining district, and in consequence for many years been paying his taxes for the support of a school system, from which it was impossible that he should derive any benefit. On hearing of the alteration about to be made in the law he was overjoyed, and said that now his children might have a chance of being educated, and the school be of some use to him and his. These anecdotes were related by Dr. Ryerson as practical evidences of the evils of the system, which though happening in the States were equally liable to occur in Canada. In many instances persons transferred their residences from one district to another, and thus were frequently taxed for the erection of school houses in both. This would be obviated under the new system, and the petty quarrels and jealousies which too often took place between so many Boards of School Trustees would also cease to exist. The subject was one which ought to receive the fullest and most comprehensive consideration, and it was, therefore, introduced to the convention.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PROPOSED BOARD — ELECTION OF MEMBERS.

Some theoretical persons had raised objections to the proposed plan, but all practical men, it was believed, thought well of it. The Board would have power to make rates and levy taxes, and nothing more would be necessary. A Board of Education separated from the Township Council should elect one member for each ward in the Township, but not elected at the same time that councillors were elected. Of course there will always be differences of opinion; but it is best to avoid all the asperity and ill-feeling incidental to contested elections as much as possible, and therefore it was thought best that the election of councillors and trustees should not take place at the same time. The election of the Township Board of Education might take place in June or July. This was the result of his later experience and observation on this subject. So far as his experience went, the result of the election of trustees in the towns and cities had been, on the whole, satisfactory.

NEW BOARDS OF COUNTY EXAMINERS.

It was intended to supersede the present County Boards of Public Instruction, to whom was delegated the duty of examining and awarding certificates to teachers. It had been complained of that the County Boards as now constituted were attended with considerable expense, and that where there were many grammar schools in a county, the whole of whose members were members of the Board of Public Instruction, the county boards were almost unworkable. Objections had also been made to them by those who received certificates or qualification. It had been said by many teachers—he might say by all with whom he had spoken on the subject (and the principle was just in itself)—that as candidates for the profession of medicine were examined by medical men, and for the legal profes-

* A copy of the Resolutions, and other information in regard to the recent County School Conventions, will be given in the next number of this Journal.