

Inspector Bridges says :

Throughout this inspectorial district during the year the schools have been kept in operation quite as regularly as in any preceding twelve months. No local licenses have been issued, the supply of licensed teachers being fully equal to the demand, and the present term affords no example of a case where a school remained closed for the reason that no regularly licensed teacher could be obtained.

Inspector Meagher notes marked progress in many of the districts of his inspectorate. Special difficulties present themselves in obtaining trained teachers for many of the schools in Madawaska and a few in Victoria ; but on the whole there is ground for encouragement.

There is a great deal of valuable and interesting information included in the report—in statistical tables, publication of the revised course of study, reports of the university and normal school, of the inspectors and other school officers, with some of the papers read at the County Institutes.

EDUCATIONAL OPINION.

True science work does not stop with mere seeing, hearing, or feeling ; it not only furnishes a mental picture as a basis for reasoning, but it includes an interpretation of what has been received through the senses. A child and a goat may see the same thing, with the advantage of vision on the side of the goat ; but the latter has no power to interpret what he sees, and is, therefore, essentially non-scientific. Within these early interpretations lies the beginning of the reasoning power, and with its development comes self-reliance, independence of thought, and a general strength of character, which marks a man among men.

If a pupil be permitted to examine an object carefully, or a set of conditions, and then be required to interpret what he sees, he is from that moment ever after stronger than he was before. By that act, no matter how trivial, he begins a great work of self-emancipation from the rule of chance, in so far as his interpretation has taught him how the forces about him may be resisted, guided and controlled.—*Jackman. International Educational Association, Toronto, 1891.*

The very learned and conservative French academy has agreed to changes in French spelling, so that the orthography of the language may be more logical and easier of acquisition by foreigners. These changes, which go into use at once, were forced upon the academy by public opinion. They affect about 1,200 words in most common use. Does it not seem strange that the savans of Germany and France are able to

effect reforms in languages in which the spelling is comparatively uniform, while the extraordinary anomalies of English spelling must continue to hamper the speech which is destined to become universal? At least one year in the life of every pupil is entirely wasted by our absurd spelling. Max Muller says that English spelling has indeed become a national misfortune which swallows up millions of money every year and destroys all attempts at a universal education.

The scientific alphabet, consisting of forty-three characters, is used by the Standard Dictionary to indicate pronunciation. Its use in primary reading books would make learning to read an easy and delightful task. The experiment has been repeatedly tried, and always with great success.

In order to help the teachers to become acquainted with the reformed spelling and to hasten the good time coming, our superintendents of education might adopt the reform in their annual reports. *

Tonic Sol-fa.

The subject of which I wish to speak to-day is methods in teaching music. By this I mean methods adapted to the requirements of the public schools of the present day. This is a subject which cannot be well treated in a written paper, but can be best exemplified by practical demonstration with a class of every-day public school pupils. In the brief space at my disposal I will confine myself almost entirely to the latter course, and will illustrate a few of the methods which I have found most useful in connection with my work in the Toronto public schools.

With regard to the system used, I may state at the outset that we use the tonic sol-fa system. This statement is one which somehow is usually expected to be accompanied with an apology, as if the teacher felt that it was not quite orthodox. I have no such apology to offer. On the contrary, I use the tonic sol-fa system because I have found it to be the best. It is based on sound educational principles, and will bear the most searching investigation. It is not, as some erroneously suppose, an untried innovation. It has been tested and tried in conservative England for the past fifty years, and what is the result? At first despised and suspected by all who claimed to be ranked among musicians, it is now approved of by nearly every musician of note ; it is taught in *ninety per cent* of the public schools which pass the government examination in music ; it has done a noble work in elevating the masses and improving the standard of music in church and school. Last week, in St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, there was assem-