

COUNTY SCHOOL CONVENTIONS IN UPPER CANADA.

PROCEEDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS.

(Continued from page 39.)

From the Rev. Elliott Grasett, ex-Local Superintendent of Bertie, Merrittville.

QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS.—The Board of Examination of School Circuit No. 2, think that the examination of teachers, as established in the programme, is of too low a standard as regards the *third class*. The majority of candidates which appear before this Board, present themselves for a third class certificate, to obtain which, it does not require much knowledge or ability, and unfortunately there are many Local Superintendents and Trustees who do not discern the value of the *first* and *second* certificates above that of the *third*, consequently *third class men* are much encouraged. They obtain the *promise of an appointment*, before they appear for examination. It would be well if the Chief Superintendent would advise School Trustees generally to establish a gradation of salaries, according to the number of class-certificates, that is, to pay to teachers of the *first* and *second* class certificates, a higher salary than to the teacher of a *third class*. As before stated, there is little or no distinction made between the three ranks of teachers, so far as this circuit is concerned.

From J. Eastwood, Esq., Township of York.

SCHOOL-RATE ON CHILDREN.—I cannot but think that, an enactment levying a tax on all children of school age, of say 3d. per month, and making every school free, the balance, if any, being raised by assessment on property, and having the salary and qualifications of teachers fixed, the latter say at £75 per annum, would be an improvement on the present system. Putting the tax on children and property, whilst it would not be oppressive on either, by legislative enactment, would prevent much of the angry feeling at present called forth, the tax on children being low, would throw a portion of the burden on property, and at the same time induce parents to send their children to school—the great object of a good school system, the neglect of which is an obstacle, greater than all others combined, to the establishment of Free Schools, the advocates of which are constantly met with the unanswerable objection of, “We have furnished a school-house, hired a teacher, and made the school free, and yet the people for whom we have expressly done this won't send their children, preferring to allow them to fill the highways.” Remove this objection, and the principle of Free Schools would be triumphant. Fixing the salary of teachers may seem rather arbitrary: it is necessary for this reason—were it not so, in many cases, just such a teacher as the tax on children and the school grant would pay, would be procured, property in such a case altogether escaping. Taxing children is, I confess, an unfair way of raising money for any purpose; but is it more unfair, than parties having children but no property, being only householders, than landlords paying the taxes, compelling parties who have property or children, or both, to hire a teacher and pay him, they keeping their children from the school and paying no taxes, can have no possible right to say whether a teacher shall be hired or not; or if he is, how he shall be paid,—this has been done. If the parents have a right to have their children educated at the public expense, and on no other ground can Free Schools be demanded, the public have a right to compel them to send their children, and I know no more efficient way of doing so than compelling them to pay something, whether they send their children to school or not. We generally suffer more from the ignorance of other person's children than our own, against which we have, I conceive, a right to protect ourselves: it is our common interest to do so. The poor themselves, generally uneducated, cannot see this, hence the absolute necessity of making them feel the effects of an evil, if it is one, more tangible than those of ignorance. A small tax on each child, although, perhaps, unjust (though this is by no means certain), would in only rare instances, be oppressive.

From the Rev. W. H. Landon, Woodstock.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.—That one be organised in every County. All qualified teachers to be eligible. First and second class certificates not to be renewed except the candidates are members of some County Institute, or can show cause why they are not. Institutes to have power to expel members for immoralities, and membership to be a sufficient certificate of moral character. Local Superintendents and all School Visitors to be members *ex officio* with right to vote. All members while in employment to pay into the Treasury a sum equal to one day's pay per quarter. A sum equal to at least one-half the aggregate contribution of members to be paid out of the Government appropriation. One meeting, at least, of four days continuance, to be held annually in the County Town, and not less than three quarterly meetings of two days, such in such other parts of the County as may be most convenient. All teachers who attend the annual and such quarterly meetings as may be held in their own or next contiguous Townships to be exempt from all poll-tax, and all Municipal burdens, except property taxes, military service, &c., and entitled to all the benefits of the Institute. Teachers residing more than five miles from the place of meeting to receive an allowance from the funds towards their expenses; the amount to be fixed by Managing Committee. Teachers of three years standing in the Institute to receive aid in cases of sickness or misfortune, according to the state of the funds. County Inspector to be enabled by Municipal Council to offer a premium annually for the best essay on such subject connected with education as shall have been specified to be read at the annual meeting.

LIBRARIES.—That a general School Library be established for each Township, and placed under the management of the Township Superintendent, who may appoint any suitable person to keep the same, provided his own residence is not in a convenient part of the Township.

An annual assessment to be made by authority of the Township Council, of a sum at least equal to the Government appropriation.

The Library to consist, 1st, of approved works on education and schools, including Reports, Essays and Treatises on school organization, discipline and government, the most approved methods of teaching, and all other subjects connected with the duties of teachers, chiefly for the use of teachers. 2ndly, of popular treatises on the arts and sciences generally, embracing History, Chronology, Biography, Statistics, Mechanics, Natural History, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Political Economy, Agriculture, &c. &c. &c., for the use of the pupils and the community generally. 3rdly, Departmental and Parliamentary Documents; viz., all Reports and Periodical Publications by the Chief Superintendent, published under the authority of Parliament; all Parliamentary Reports, and the Provincial Statutes of each Session, suitably bound, as many copies of each to be sent to each Township Library as there are School Sections in the same.

The Secretary-Treasurer of each School Section to be allowed to draw from Township Library all such works as may have been deposited in favor of such Section, and take charge of them in behalf of his section, so soon as it shall be certified by the County Inspector that suitable provision has been made by him for the safe keeping of the same, and also monthly to draw such a number of other books as shall be allowed by bye-laws to be made for the purpose. Teachers shall have free access at all times to the Township or Section Library, and may take out for his own use, not more than two volumes from each, at any one time. Books lost or damaged shall be made good by the parties or Corporation holding them at the time.

From Messrs. G. Anderson, Trustee; J. Anderson, ex-Trustee; and D. Thompson and Dunn, Teachers. County of Lincoln.

FREE SCHOOLS.—We have observed the working of the Free School system, as contrasted with that of a rate-bill levied on the parents and guardians of the children attending school in our own School Section; and have carefully watched the results of the same in other School Sections, and have also made inquiries on the same subject of persons residing at some distance,—from all of which we are clearly convinced that no system could be adopted in this Province, calculated to afford