

period when the Intermediate examination is going on in such school, those pupils who are not engaged in the examination.

ADAM CROOKS,
Minister.

Education Department,
March 21, 1877.

12. NEW EDUCATION BILL, ONTARIO.

SPEECH OF HON. MR. CROOKS ON FIRST READING.

JANUARY 22nd, 1877.

MR. SPEAKER,—I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill entitled an Act to amend the several Acts respecting the Education Department, the Public and High Schools, and the University of Toronto. In making this motion, I propose to state briefly the principal provisions which I have attempted to introduce into these amendments not in order to bring about any radical changes in the principles which we find already on the Statute-book, but rather to give more effect to those principles; and I hope upon the second reading of the Bill that these different proposed amendments will receive full discussion from hon. members, knowing that the most satisfactory measure which can be adopted will be that which has been the result of full discussion and deliberations by the House, composed as it is of many members who have so large an amount of practical experience in connection with this question. I would not myself have presumed to enter upon several of the proposed amendments unless it had been extremely desirable that, when the Revised Statutes respecting Education were being consolidated, they should be compiled with a view of making them a *vade mecum* or compendium of our School Law. But for that circumstance of endeavouring to make as far as possible the Revised Statutes on Education a perfect compendium to enable any ordinary person of experience in these matters to understand the Law, I would have preferred to defer submitting to this House and the country any amendments of this law at the present. My experience has been, of course, very brief, but I have endeavoured as far as possible to overcome my own deficiency by ascertaining the judgment and views of those, many of whom have had a lifetime's experience in the general education of the country. I have been, however, very careful not to assume to introduce any new principle, but to extend what we now find in the existing law in those respects, which may be considered an improvement in the judgment of hon. members. I propose to take up the amendments in the same order in which the Law will be found in the Revised Statutes. Under the general title of education, it is proposed in the Revised Statutes submitted to the House, so to separate the several subjects coming within the general title, that access and information can be very readily obtained. As far as Public and High Schools are concerned, the first part will contain everything which properly relates to the Education Department and the Minister administering it. The second part will comprise the law respecting Public Schools, and the third, that relating to High Schools; while under the same titles will be found that part of the law which relates to Separate Schools, and the whole text of the Act of 1863, relating to Roman Catholic Separate Schools. Then there are also the other institutions, as the University of Toronto and Upper Canada College. The amendments I propose to introduce are such as relate chiefly to that part of our educational system which is under the control of the Education Department. Under the title of the Education Department I desire to submit two substantial questions for the consideration of the House in order to effect improvements in regard to them. The High Schools have occupied a very prominent position—a very useful one, no doubt—in our educational system, and by one step after another, have come to occupy conspicuously a position which is dependent mainly on scholastic as distinguished from other considerations. (Hear, hear.) It is upon their educational merits that High Schools have risen, by the system of admission examinations, and of late by the intermediate examinations; but it is further thought desirable to encourage them to improve their standard, so that the curriculum may be such as to enable a boy of ordinary ability and industry to prepare himself for any career in after life. I also propose to give other encouragements in connection with the appropriations from the Legislative Grant, so that the High Schools may obtain credit for all such distinctions which their pupils may obtain in examinations before learned bodies, such as the Law Society, or in matriculation at Universities either in Canada or Great Britain, also to give facilities which may further encourage High Schools to improve their position in the work of superior education. The Education Department has also to consider the best means of improving the

qualification of teachers in the Public Schools. The great deficiency in our system at present arises from the very large number of inexperienced teachers who have charge of the great majority of the schools of the Province. We must carefully examine the position of our Public Schools with reference to the qualification of the teachers in charge of them, in order to understand fully what our position now is in this particular. In 1875 the number of Public Schools was 4,834, and these schools were in charge of 6,018 teachers, of this number 3,552 hold certificates of the third-class, and 539 have only permits, so that two-thirds of the whole number of teachers hold only certificates of the lowest class; and, to it will appear further, that there is a larger influx in 1876, as compared with 1875, of third-class teachers. At the July examinations of 1876, 1,801 candidates were successful, of whom 1,668 obtained third-class certificates, only 11 First, and 122 second-class certificates. Thus the tendency will necessarily be to fill up vacancies as they annually occur, with those teachers who are inexperienced, and have not had any actual practice in the art of teaching and no knowledge of teaching other than they may have gained when pupils themselves. The teacher is called upon to begin with the dawn of intelligence in the youngest child sent to school, and there is greater need of experience in the gradual process of developing the latent faculties than where they are more matured. The 1,801 successful third-class candidates came out of a total of 4,485 applicants. This shows the tendency of our youth, male and female, to enter into the teaching profession, and it is clear that there is a superabundance of material from which to draw our teachers, and the proposition is not now how to encourage the youth to enter the teaching service, but rather to take advantage of this tendency, and afford facilities for their improving themselves. A spirit prevails which is very creditable among the many young men and woman, who are becoming teachers, and if opportunities for gaining improved experience are afforded them, they will not neglect to take advantage of them. Such opportunities must be accessible, in the sense of being convenient of access, to teachers in different localities throughout the Province. Another difficulty in the training of teachers arises from the temporary nature of the teaching service. In this particular our experience is similar to that of the States of the Union, from Massachusetts in the East to Illinois in the West. The average period of service is under five years; in Massachusetts it is three and a-half years, and our experience would probably result in the average here not being more than five years. I find, since the new system came into force under the Act of 1871, that from 1871 to 1874, 13,883 candidates for certificates presented themselves. Of these, 7,928 obtained certificates—about 6,000 being in the third-class, only fifty-two in the first class, and 900 in the second-class. Taking then into consideration these two circumstances, it is proposed that the law shall be so amended as to extend the advantages of that kind of training which is designated "Normal" or which consists in the theory and practice of teaching; to supply this it is proposed to establish in each county one or more county model schools, in which the opportunity will be given to candidates for third-class certificates to spend some weeks for observation, and practical knowledge, besides being required to pass a satisfactory examination in the prescribed subjects and this will be an advantage to teachers and their pupils alike.

The value of a teacher so trained will be improved, and trustees will prefer the teacher who thus has gained experience in a county model school while the teacher will be able to take charge of a school without being entirely inexperienced. It is also possible to further improve the position of teachers, and to give to schools who are looking out for a higher class of teachers than the holders of third-class certificates, better opportunities for obtaining these. The Normal School at Toronto, when first established, was obliged to fulfil two offices,—that of a seminary or academy for the instruction of students in the higher subjects of education, and the other in their special training as teachers. The necessity of the time required that the Normal School at Toronto should fulfil these two functions, but now the reason for the former appears to have been removed, through the existence of High Schools in every part of the Province. This question, therefore, can be dealt with by affording further opportunities to candidates for second-class certificates, for availing themselves of Normal School instruction, while they can make up the deficiencies in their general education, in the High Schools which these can now readily and conveniently supply in many particulars, perhaps, better than the Normal School (Hear, hear). It is proposed, therefore, to give the Department authority to make such arrangements in connection with the Normal School, as will facilitate the attendance of candidates for second-class certificates at the Normal Schools. In order to overcome the obstacles of distance and small means, it is proposed to pay the travelling expenses of candidates for second-class certificates to either of the Normal Schools, and to contribute about one half of the weekly ex-