

Mr. George Duck, jr., Superintendent of Schools in the Western District, (Kent, etcetera), says:—

"In many of the Townships little, or nothing, was raised by Rate-bill. In many places the poverty of the settlements prevented it; and the only School that was kept open in these Districts was just during the time that allowance from the aggregate fund was sufficient to pay the Teacher. This course is, in fact, a very doubtful benefit, as the School is seldom kept open for more than three months in the year, and the children lose so much benefit, continuous education produces."

The Reverend Doctor Ryerson, in his Report for 1845-46, speaking of School Houses in the Province, says:—

"With a few exceptions, the School Houses are deficient in almost every essential quality of places adopted for elementary instruction. Very few are furnished with any thing more than Desks and Forms of the most ordinary kind, and have no apparatus for instruction, nor appendages, or conveniences either for exercise, or such as are required for the sake of modesty and decency."

Mr. Caniff Haight, in Canada of "Fifty Years Ago," gives the following account of the Common School education in his day:—The School House was close at hand, and its aspect is deeply graven in my memory. It was a small, square structure, with low ceiling. In the centre of the Room was a Box Stove, around which the long wooden Benches, without backs, were ranged. Next the Walls were the Desks, raised a little from the floor. In the Summer time the Pupils were all of tender years, the elder ones being kept at home to help with the work. I was one of the lot of little lads ranged daily on hard wooden Seats, with our feet dangling in the air for seven or eight hours a day. In such a plight we were expected to be very good children, to make no noise, and to learn our lessons. It is a marvel that so many years had to elapse before Parents and Teachers could be brought to see that keeping children in such a position for so many hours was an act of great cruelty. The terror of the Rod was the only thing that could keep us still, and that often failed. Sometimes, tired and weary, we fell asleep and tumbled off the bench, to be awakened by the fall of the Rod. In the Winter time, the small School was filled to overflowing with the larger boys and girls. This did not improve our condition, for we were more closely packed together, and were either shivering with the cold or being roasted with the red-hot Stove. . . . I next sat under the Rod of an Irish pedagogue—an old man who evidently believed that the only way to get anything into a boy's head was to pound it with a stick through his back. There was no discipline, and the noise we made seem to rival a bedlam. pp. 17, 18.

As far as my recollection goes, the Teachers were generally of a very inferior order, and rarely possessed more than a smattering of the rudiments of Grammar and Arithmetic. They were poorly paid, and "boarded round" the neighborhood. But it is not improbable that they generally received all that their services were worth. . . . The School Houses where the youth were taught were in keeping with the extent of instruction received within them. They were invariably small, with low ceilings, badly lighted, and without ventilation.—pp. 157, 158.