

in a rural district a successful library. In Massachusetts, township libraries, as far as they have yet been established, are said to be working well; but they are by no means universal even there, where the definition of man may almost be said to be that he is a "reading animal;" and in New York and Ohio they have confessedly broken down. There are said to be in Upper Canada about 3,000 public libraries, containing about 700,000 volumes. I do not know whether the University libraries are included in this calculation; but even supposing that they are not, these figures only allow an average of less than 240 volumes to each, and sometimes (as we have seen) the number of volumes actually in a library is not much more than a fifth of this amount. Of these again only a limited number would suit the taste of each individual; these would be soon perused, and my own experience is that it is very difficult to persuade people to read a library book through a second time, however interesting its contents, and however little they may remember them. That there should be a general desire for mental culture, or that the attractions of public libraries should be very strong, while elementary education continues to do so little to quicken literary tastes, is a thing not reasonably to be expected.

SUPERANNUATED TEACHERS' FUND.

The Canadian Legislature appropriates \$4,000 per annum in aid of superannuated or worn-out common school teachers. By a liberal construction of the law, though no time is allowed to any applicant except that which has been employed in teaching a common school in Upper Canada, yet his having kept school for many years in England, Ireland, Scotland, or the other British North American provinces is allowed to admit him to the category of "worn-out common school teachers," even though he may only have taught for a few years in Canada. The whole plan does credit both to the wisdom and the liberality of its framers. That a country, comparatively so poor as Canada should be able and willing to maintain a system of equitable relief to superannuated or disabled teachers which we, with all our wealth, attempted, but felt ourselves obliged to abandon, is, to my mind, a fact not a little remarkable.

Such, in all its main features, is the school system of Upper Canada. A system, in the eyes of its administrators, who regard it with justifiable self-complacency, not perfect, but yet far in advance, as a system of national education, of anything that we can show at home. It is indeed very remarkable to me that in a country, occupied in the greater part of its area by a sparse and anything but wealthy population, whose predominant characteristic is as far as possible removed from the spirit of enterprise, an educational system so complete in its theory and so capable of adaptation in practice should have been originally organized, and have been maintained in what, with all allowances, must still be called successful operation for so long a period as 25 years. It shows what can be accomplished by the energy, determination and devotion of a single earnest man. What national education in Great Britain owes to Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, what education in New England owes to Horace Mann, that debt education in Canada owes to Egerton Ryerson. He has been the object of bitter abuse, of not a little misrepresentation; but he has not swerved from his policy or from his fixed ideas. Through evil report and good report he has resolved, and he has found others to support him in the resolution, that free education shall be placed within the reach of every Canadian parent for every Canadian child. I hope I have not been ungenerous in dwelling sometimes upon the deficiencies in this noble work. To point out a defect is sometimes the first step towards repairing it; and if this report should ever cross the ocean and be read by those of whom it speaks, I hope, not with too great freedom, they will, perhaps, accept the assurance that, while I desired to appreciate, I was bound, above all, to be true; and that even where I could not wholly praise, I never meant to blame. Honest criticism is not hostility.

II. Papers on Teachers' Associations.

1. ANNUAL CONVENTION OF TEACHERS.

Fourth Annual Convention of Teachers, in connection with the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Lower Canada, met in the Examination Hall of the Magill Normal School, Belmont street, Quebec, on the 18th inst.

The chair was taken by Principal Dawson, President. The Ven. Archdeacon Leach opened the proceedings with prayer. The President then called on the Secretary to read the minutes and the Treasurer's account, which were read and confirmed. A number of letters were then read by the President, from delegates unable to attend. Principal Dawson now read a short paper from Professor Roux, of Lennoxville College, on Civic Instruction. The paper

urged the importance of Civic Instruction, in our Normal and national schools, as necessary to preserve the liberties of the people. The proposed course was as follows:—

Preliminary notions on society in general: on the three powers in the State: legislative, executive, and judiciary; of the diverse forms of government: monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical.

General view of the British Constitution, of that constitution which is becoming more and more nearer to that supreme ideal of a representative government, and where, by a combination of causes and circumstances, the three elements, the monarchic, the aristocratic, and the democratic, united and reconciled, temper and preserve each other in a truly wonderful way; and also a general view of the relations of the Imperial Government with the Colonies.

A short history of the constitutions which have successfully governed the British American Colonies, and of the formation of the new constitution.

A general view of the new constitution in its relations both to Federal and Local matters.

A general view of the rights therein guaranteed, and of the duties therein implied.

A thorough analysis of our municipalities; of the obligations that are imposed upon such who are members thereof: of elections; duties of electors; of those that are loyally and morally qualified to be elected; of public functionaries; their qualifications and duties; of the respect and obedience due to them; of the limits of the latter (i.e. obedience.)

The text of the new constitution.

A table of the Federal and Local authorities, and of their functions.

A map of all the British American Colonies, and of the Dominion.

A table showing the extent, population, income, expenditure, debts, resources, navy, militia, etc., of the Dominion.

Principal Dawson thought that the influence of those engaged in education would be largely increased by the establishment of an official organ to treat of such matters. Professor Robbins said the suggestions were most important, and from the first establishment of the association it was necessary to look forward to changes in their constitution, and he believed the time had now come for opening communication with the sister provinces on educational matters. After some discussion it was then moved by Professor Robbins, seconded by Mr. Scarlett, That the President of this Association name a committee to communicate with the different Provincial committees with a view to form a combined association for the whole Dominion, and for the establishment of an official organ. Carried.

PROFESSOR ROUX'S PAPER.

The President now said Professor Roux's paper on Civic Instruction, was open to discussion. Archdeacon Leach said it was a matter which had long engaged his attention, but he contended along with Civic Instruction, moral duties should also be enforced. Mr. Hubbard thought the matter ought to be brought before the children and parents, as many people were ignorant of these matters. Prof. Robbins said he knew a teacher in a large school in Upper Canada who had tried to carry out this idea but failed for want of a text book. Professor Hicks complained that the difficulty was to find time with so many other studies. He thought this subject was comprised in the good teaching of history. Archdeacon Leach said the time would come when these subjects would be taught. In regard to a text book, he had once proposed to the great Dr. Whewell, of Trinity College, Cambridge, to cut down his great work on the subject. But he objected as he thought it might destroy its unity, though he approved of the plan. Mr. Howe, Rector of the High School, thought they had too much to teach as it was, that other things were most important, and that for mere children the subject was too abstruse. Professor Robbins said the newspapers were the great instructors in morals and jurisprudence. Mr. Scarlett thought a catechism on the whole theory of government and connected with the study of History would be a good thing. There was such a catechism by Brydges. Principal Dawson, on closing the debate, said he approved of the idea and that the subject should be taught in Normal Schools. That the attention of Teachers should be directed to it, and that it should form a part of the course of study of advanced classes in academies. The government even might insist that no one should have a public office who were not versed in such subjects. He believed such a manual written in good English, Latin, or French, would be invaluable.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL HOURS.

Professor Hicks said he would be glad to give his own opinion on this question which was agitating the minds of the people. Some considered three hours enough, but would not take the child away from the teacher all the rest of the time. He found, however, every day there were more subjects to teach, and did not think the length of school hours injurious to children. Mr. Howe said that it was proposed by a certain method to give the children as much instruc-