

TOWN AND COUNTRY SCHOOLS.

In an open letter to the Amherstburg public school board, published in *The Leader*, of that town, Mr. C. M. S. Thomas, who signs himself Ex-pupil-teacher-and-trustee, gives some hard raps to the parsimonious spirit so often displayed by municipal councils and school boards in country districts. He heads his letter with a parody of one of the stanzas of Father Prout's "Shandon Bells," thus:

"With deep affection
And recollection
I often think of
That Malden school,
And some rich old farmers
With chock-full barns,
But their teacher on
A three-legged milking stool."

It may do good in some quarters if we re-print portions of this racy letter. After accusing the Board of indifference and neglect, apparently shared by the community, Mr. Thomas goes on:

"Now, I tell you straight, that I believe it is all owing to your parsimonious, cent-wise, dollar-foolish policy of economy. Year after year, it has been your custom to draw barely enough money to pay the teacher and janitor, making no provision for general repairs and modern improvements. It is all very well to economise, but while you are not spending any money for improvements you are going behind the times, and while you are not constantly repairing, the building and fences are going to pot.

"It will soon be time for you to make your annual demand on the town council, and for our perennial reeve to whisper 'make it low as possible, Tom' (which admonition 'Tom' does not require by any means.) But this year, I hope, you will ask for \$1,000 extra. If you demand it they are bound to provide it. They can find plenty of money for prospective railroads, etc., and it should not be at the expense of our Public schools.

"Yes, I know, advice is like castor oil, easy to give, but hard to take; but there is no time for quibbling now, for in a few days the mid-summer holidays will be on, and you should decide quickly on what you intend to have done, and have your contracts let and other arrangements made, and lose no time in getting to work. Don't wait until the holidays are half over and look around for a whitewash brush and barely clean up by time school re-opens. But more than whitewashing is required this year.

"1st. Throw out those four antediluvian stoves and put in a modern coal furnace. Think of the children who roast on one side and freeze on the other.

"2nd. Remove the plaster (what is left of it) from the ceilings in the two lower rooms, and ceil with wood, or you will have some broken craniums to pay for soon.

"3rd. Lay a new maple floor throughout, not pine as before, which has worn thin as pasteboard in places, leaving knots and nail heads sticking up like the excrescences on an alligator's back.

"4th. Get four (4) water-taps, placed inside, one for each division. The idea of one awkward pent-stock placed outside in the fence between the two yards for two hundred pupils is an outrage, and should have been reported to the society for the prevention of cruelty to children long ago! Economy forsooth!

"5th. Common sense ventilation. Throwing open the windows for fresh air is too primitive. Noah did that in the ark.

"6th. Put a hand-rail on the stairs and hardwood steps.

"7th. A complete set of the latest maps is wanted. Those now on hand apparently came over with Columbus.

"8th. Two new water-closets on the dry earth system, large, artistically built, and well ventilated. Those now in use are shocking, demoralizing, and a disgrace to civilization. They would make even a Chinaman blush. Refined English fails to properly describe them. They require to be seen (at a distance) to be appreciated, and I have been informed that Borrowman's chickens roost in them every night.

"Now, gentlemen, do throw off your lethargy and raise the moral and physical standard of your school. The power lies in your hands."

Mr. Thomas pleads for the beautifying of the school surroundings, the encouragement of teachers by kind words, and he advises people

to show an interest in the progress of the pupils. He is right. Many a child, and many a teacher pines, but pines in vain for a look or a word of kindly interest in school matters on the part of the parent. He compliments the board on having secured a good staff of teachers, and he closes by asking that a flag-staff shall be raised on which to hoist "our incomparable colors" on every historic day or national anniversary. 'Twere good to do so much for patriotism.

IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS.

He who sees a setback in business at this time must be gazing through a telescope pointed by mistake at some other country. From all parts of the United States, the best advices obtainable tell of a rising tide of trade and industry, which threatens here and there to mount too far and too fast. Daily payments through clearing-houses in June are 26.9 per cent larger than last year, though 8.6 per cent smaller than in 1892, the last year of full business at this season. A rise of more than a quarter in a single year is the more significant because, in spite of recent advances, the prices of commodities as a whole average a fraction of one per cent lower than a year ago. Two influences of tremendous power contribute to the rise, encouraging crop news and confident replenishing of stocks which have been for two years depleted to the utmost.

Reports from spring wheat States and from the Pacific coast are so cheering that, although the loss of winter wheat was large, those whose estimates have been most accurate in recent years now vary in predictions from 430 to 470 million bushels. Atlantic exports for three weeks, flour included, have been only 3,758,718 bushels, against 6,006,232 last year, indicating no urgent demand at current prices. There has been a fall of 6 cents in wheat, with heavier sales than for three weeks past.

The rush for supplies in iron and steel resembles a "bear panic" in the stock market. Because prices are mounting everybody hurries to buy, so that they mount higher. Bessemer iron has reached \$12.65 at Pittsburg, the Bar

Association has advanced common to \$1.15, the Wire Nail Association puts up the price to \$1.50 per keg, the steel rail makers have raised the price to \$24, Eastern and Southern furnaces have both raised prices again 50 cents per ton, and structural beams are \$1.35, and angles \$1.25. It is undeniable that works in operation are crowded with orders, and others which have been idle for years are preparing to resume. At the same time the most potent cause of the upward start in prices, the general belief that a combination of coke producers would raise the price to \$1.50 after July 1, is apparently removed by war among the producers, and a fall to \$1.25 in contracts for the last half of 1895.

Sales of wool at the chief markets, 3,113,700 lbs. domestic and 3,844,400 foreign, are larger than in any previous year for the same week, and in three weeks of June have been 19,516,065 pounds, of which 10,631,700 were foreign, against 16,933,600 in 1892, of which 7,764,800 were foreign. Orders for men's woollens are a little better, and the Washington mills have opened their Clay worsteds at an advance of about 2½ per cent., though some lower grades are reduced in price. Advances continue in cotton goods, and are sustained by unusual demand and scarcity at a time when the mills are generally anxious to clear off old stocks. Shipments of boots and shoes for the week have been the largest ever known in any week, 101,425 cases, according to the *Shoe and Leather Reporter*, and for three weeks of June have been 1 per cent larger than in any previous year. Many shops are stopping, though most have orders to August or September.

Failures for the second week of June show liabilities of only \$2,092,382, of which \$702,357 were manufacturing and \$1,329,625 were trading, against \$2,917,535 in all for the same week last year, of which \$688,137 were manufacturing and \$2,220,766 were trading. Additions for the first week of June raise the aggregate for two weeks, including the Cordage concern, to \$14,321,841, of which \$10,517,825 were manufacturing and \$3,684,116 were trading. Failures for the week have been 228 in the United States against 214 last year, and 31 in Canada against 25 last year.—*Dun's Review*, June 22nd.

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