

School No. 27.—19 admitted; 16 present at inspection. Dictation, with one very creditable exception, quite poor; in several instances, indescribably bad.

School No. 28 (a Collegiate Institute.)—The deficiencies of the "entrance" pupils in this case took me much by surprise. 25 were present at the inspection, and were subjected in the first instance to an oral examination in parsing, with the exception of the relative "that" everything was missed except by some two or three. I then tried them with written work, the result being not much more satisfactory. Arithmetic also was weak. So glaring were the deficiencies of these pupils that one of the masters confessed they were the worst of the kind they had ever had.

Other cases might be cited, showing how very necessary it is that High School Inspectors' veto should be maintained.

PREPARATORY CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOLS.

In the last number of this *Journal* we published a strong protest of the Ottawa Public School Board sent to the Lieutenant-Governor, against the establishment of a Preparatory School in High Schools or Collegiate Institutes. Such classes are clearly unauthorized under the High School Act.

It is a principle of law that no corporation can exceed the powers conferred upon it by the Legislature, or other competent authority. Now the Act under which the High School Board is constituted makes it the duty of that Board "to make provision for giving to both male and female pupils * * * instruction in all the higher branches of a practical English and commercial education * * * according to a programme, rules and regulations, prescribed by the Council of Public Instruction," etc. The Act gives no other authority on this point; nor does it even give any authority to provide for giving instruction in the "higher" ones, in accordance with a prescribed programme. The law, further, only provides for the admission of pupils to the High School on their coming up to a certain standard, fixed by the Council of Public Instruction. The statute and regulations provide also for the employment (during their whole time), and payment of teachers to perform the necessary duties under the Act, and declares that "no High School shall receive any portion of the grant which is not conducted according to law and the regulations."

The Education Department has invariably resisted the establishment of preparatory classes in High Schools; and under no circumstances has it consented to allow any of the time of the masters or teachers of a High School to be taken from their regular classes, and given to the teaching of an unauthorized private or preparatory classes in the school.

The Legislature has made ample provision for the establishment and maintenance of elementary classes in the Public Schools, but it has restricted the High Schools to the teaching of the "higher" branches of an English and commercial education."

ATTACKS ON THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

We have already in this paper met and exposed the injustice of one class of attacks upon the Education Department in connection with the apportionments to High Schools. Another one equally unjust and unfair has appeared in the *Canadian Monthly* magazine for January. It is as follows:—

"To what do we attribute the failure in framing the laws? to the neglect of the subject by Parliament and its *mismanagement by the Education Department*. The various measures proposed by the Chief Superintendent have all *betrayed a certain crudity and lack of precision* which have been fatal to their success. The head of the Education Department * * * has often, I fear, been led astray by his hobbies and by the advice of incompetent subordinates * * * the clerical element (in the Council of Public Instruction) has an unfairly strong representation in the Council, *while the lay element is illiterate* * * * it does not consist of men able to advise Dr. Ryerson and it is therefore no check at all on *bureaucratic mismanagement*."

The anonymous writer of these unjust and improper remarks has not ventured to offer a single proof of their correctness.

He sets up a man of straw for the pleasure of showing his skill in knocking him down. For instance, he speaks of the Council of Public Instruction giving the Chief Superintendent "advice" in framing his educational measures, when in point of fact not a single member of the Council has ever offered any advice or given any opinion to him on the subject! Their functions are entirely different and are prescribed by statute. Then again, any one at all acquainted with the processes of legislation knows how well nigh impossible it is to get a measure through the House without mutilation. In the case of the School Bills it was stated that the alleged mutilation which the measures received in 1860 and 1871, were so many that they could not be "recognized." No wonder, then, that after thus running the gauntlet they should betray "a certain crudity and lack of precision." A dozen men with different views "amending" a measure before the House—the more symmetrical it might be in its original form the worse for it—would soon reduce it to a mass of "crudity" and destroy whatever "precision" any part of it might possess. This requires no demonstration, and yet the Chief Superintendent is made responsible for all the "crudities" and "lack of precision" which might be embodied in a measure under such circumstances!

In speaking of the application of the elective principle to the Council of Public Instruction, a "Head Master" gives expression to the following sensible views in which we heartily coincide:—

"It would, in my opinion, be exceedingly injurious to place a teacher engaged in the exercise of his profession in the Council. He would have a voice in the appointment of his own inspectors; would have access to the private reports of the inspectors, and would be in a position to obtain information which might give his school an unfair advantage over others, and he might assist in passing measures which would be for his personal interest."

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS.

In regard to this point we cannot do better than append the following suggestions on the subject from the Chief Superintendent's last report. He recommends:—

1. That the standard of admission to the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes be uniform throughout the Province.
2. That no pupils be admitted to the High Schools except on satisfactorily passing a written examination, and obtaining a minimum of fifty per cent. of the value of the papers.
3. That suitable accommodation be provided, in all cases, for the High Schools.
4. That the programme of studies and limit table, when finally prepared and authorized, be strictly adhered to, except by permission obtained upon the report and recommendation of the Inspector.
5. That at least two competent masters be employed in every High School.
6. That before the principle of "payment by results" be applied to High Schools, their status and classification (as a starting point), be ascertained by a written examination of the pupils in one or more of the classes.
7. That in all cases the Council of Public Instruction shall have the right, through its inspectors, to determine whether the answers given in a written examination come up or not to the minimum standard.
8. That an additional High School Inspector be appointed, in order that effect may be given to the new system of payment by results; and that the three inspectors be authorized and required, in places where there are High Schools or Collegiate Institutes, to enquire into the condition and efficiency, of the Public and Separate Schools, which are entitled to prepare and send pupils to the High Schools or Collegiate Institutes.
9. That masters of High Schools should, before appointment, be required to furnish some evidence of a knowledge of the art of teaching.