

# JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

## THE ANNUAL REPORT ON EDUCATION.

For the benefit of those into whose hands the Annual Report may not come, we give the following sections. The information which these passages convey are of especial importance, and ought to engage the careful attention of all who take an interest in the welfare of our Public Schools.

### SCHOOLS.

During the winter 1535 teachers and assistants taught 1487 schools and departments in 1236 school sections. During the summer 1650 teachers and assistants taught 1602 schools and departments in 1365 school sections. These have been distributed not very unequally in proportion to the population. There are in the Province 1679 school sections, of these 250 have been without schools during the whole year, 413 during the winter, and 314 during the summer term. These sections compose a very considerable population of children of the ages, which are considered school going, but who, notwithstanding all the facilities provided for education in this Province, are advancing to mature life uneducated. The educational work of these 250 sections, as intended and provided for by the laws of the Province, extends to every class, and is adapted to every social position, fitting the recipient of the provided boon, for useful and successful life. Although our common schools do not aim at what is called higher class education, their elementary work secures a training by which business habits are formed, and the accurate business man secured to the community. English grammar, history, geography, arithmetic, geometry, practical mathematics, reading and penmanship, are branches which are taught, and receive particular attention in all our common schools. If a pupil is well grounded in these he is furnished with appliances through which, with integrity and persevering industry, life will be no failure; with these requisitions, our young men wherever their lot may be cast, need not want but a fair field to secure fortune to themselves and honor to their native Province.

### ATTENDANCE.

For convenience sake we shall re-insert the following table by which may be seen at a glance the progress in attendance of pupils at school in the course of the last seventeen years.

| Years.    | No. of Pupils registered in Winter. | No. of Pupils registered in Summer. | No. Different Pupils registered during the year. |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1856..... | 29451                               | 33163                               |  |
| 1857....  | 31626                               | 37087                               |  |
| 1858....  | 31051                               | 33430                               |  |
| 1859..... | 39319                               | 37844                               |  |
| 1860..... | 33210                               | 37376                               |  |
| 1861..... | 31409                               | 35895                               |  |
| 1862..... | 34111                               | 38022                               |  |
| 1863..... | 33311                               | 41656                               |  |
| 1864..... | 39265                               | 37516                               |  |
| 1865..... | 35151                               | 43771                               |  |
| 1866..... | 45131                               | 56017                               |  |
| 1867..... | 61718                               | 70075                               |  |
| 1868..... | 63083                               | 72141                               |  |
| 1869..... | 72756                               | 75523                               |  |
| 1870..... | 74321                               | 76237                               |  |
| 1871....  | 71759                               | 77235                               |  |
| 1872..... | 70780                               | 76196                               |  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 71059  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 83048  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 88707  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 93731  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 91496  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 92858  |
|           |                                     |                                     | 91637  |

Not Reported.

These figures tell a volume of truth; they tell how education has been expanding its influence, an influence which has been gradually but effectively embracing the whole of our population. From it, too, we derive the assurance that results, yet more valuable and gratifying to the friends of education may be anticipated with almost absolute certainty.

It has been remarked that the children of 250 school sections have not, during any part of the year, been enjoying the blessing of education which the institutions of our country so amply provide for them. I have also to state that 16,137 children between the ages of 5 and 15 years residing in sections having schools, did not attend school during the winter term, and that 13,383 provided with like privileges did not attend school during the summer term. The following extract from the report of the Rev. R. Summerville will show the extent of this evil in Kings, a county standing at the front rank of our educational movement.

“There are more than 300 children in the county, for whose education no provision has been made for several years, and the number between 5 and 15 years of age, resident in sections where school privileges were provided during the year, not in registered attendance, exceeds 200. How long shall this state of things continue? Until we have some sort of compulsory enactment. I must not occupy space in urging the necessity of immediate action in the matter. It would be to repeat what I have already said in former reports.”

I regret extremely to have to say, that in the attendance generally there has been a decrease. A reference to the subjoined tables will show that during the year 1872 the number of pupils of both sexes attending school was 1221 less than in 1871. I shall take occasion again, under the heading of teaching, to refer to this deplorable fact. I will, however, here remark that from year to year the County Inspectors and others have continued to suggest *compulsory attendance*. My own views, as expressed in the Report of last year, remain unchanged, nevertheless I think it probable that ere many more years shall have passed, the public mind will be sufficiently trained and reliable upon this point, so that, without the risk of litigation and at last, partial failure likely to occur were it immediately attempted, to enforce such a law; some measure be adopted to make attendance at school obligatory for some portion of the year.

I am persuaded that even now a step might be taken in this direction with good results, were it the law that, in every school section in which there are a certain number of children of age to attend school, and a certain amount of taxable property, there shall be a school. Many sections now destitute would have a school; and as the tax-payers of such sections would be obliged to sustain it, they would, in all probability, if only to get some return for their money, send their children. I am quite sure that such a change in the law is in entire harm my with the spirit and purpose of the whole scheme of free education, and would prepare the way for an act for compulsory education generally. Such an amendment of the school law would produce other benefits. At many of our annual school meetings, generally the first question considered is: “Shall we have a school?” Obstructionists raise a dispute on this, get up a debate, manage to throw the meeting into confusion, and thus, too often, carry their point in whole or in part. Such an act as I have suggested would settle this often vexed question; and the object of the meeting would then be simply to decide upon the sum required for the maintenance of the school, and to transact general business. By this course alone I think that the number of children not attending school would be largely diminished.

### EXPENDITURE.

It will be seen that the Provincial Government has during the year expended the sum of \$171,395 97, at the same time the expenditure by counties has amounted to \$95132 77-100,