

The Committee have examined the Reports of the School Inspectors, and the extracts which they publish completely justify the opinion of your Committee on the working of the School Laws.

On a subject of such vital importance, exaggeration and dissimulation, whether in blaming or approving, are equally dangerous, and the duty of the Committee was to disguise nothing, and to place the facts before this House as they were elicited by the enquiry.

The Committee are forced, from these investigations, to declare that the Elementary School Laws do not work with efficiency, and that the results obtained are far from being as desirable as they ought to be. It is perhaps impolitic to disturb the state of indolence which public opinion at present enjoys, by denying that optimism in which the best thinking men of the country exist. But the too often repeated assertion, that the cause of popular instruction is sufficiently promoted by the opening of a great number of schools, must be judged by the results. A law on education and a state endowment, do not yet constitute education. These two facts constitute a progress, but the organisation may be in some parts defective, and be unavailing, except as regards the putting into execution of the purely material and external part of the system. It is the duty of the Legislature attentively to study the results of the law, and coolly to appreciate its practical importance, to the advantage of the law itself and of its working.

Your Committee have divided their labors, by examining—

1. The state of primary instruction, and the working of the law.
2. The causes which retard and have retarded education.
3. The means to be adopted to render the present law more effective, and to perfect our system of primary instruction.

The answers obtained from more than four hundred persons, on points calculated to determine in a peremptory manner the state of primary instruction establish the following facts :

The number of Commissioners who know how to read and write is only 502 out of 1025, in the Municipalities from which the Committee have received reports; the number of male teachers is 516, and that of the female teachers, 822.

The salaries are apportioned as follows :

Under £10	15
Under £12 10s.....	45
Under £20	114
From £25 to £40.....	455
Over £50.....	40

The age of the female teachers is as follows :

From 15 to 18 years.....	118
Under 20 years.....	193
Under 25 years.....	343

The number of male and female teachers, out of 1991 declared qualified, is 412. The number of children who, since the law has been in operation, have continued their studies in the colleges, is 881.

Out of 1338 Schools, there are maps in 396 only, and globes in a very small number.

Out of 205 Secretary-treasurers of different municipalities who have given in answers, 100, only, declare that the law works more or less well.

Out of 140 Priests whose answers have been received, 20 only make the same declaration for their Parishes.

The number of Model Schools is only 78.

The Superintendent has never, or scarcely ever, visited the schools.