

honor. There are several other points upon which I would like to write, but feel that this letter is too lengthy as it is.

HULL, Q.

JOHN L. WALTON.

*To the Editor of the Sherbrooke Gazette :*

Without attempting a discussion of the Hon. Judge Lynch's remarks in regard to our Academies, I wish to take exception to the somewhat sweeping condemnation, in your editorial of last week, of our Common, or more properly Elementary, schools.

You speak, at the outset, of the injurious effects of the large number of books required, the frequent changing of books, (and) the multiplicity of studies imposed in our . . . Common Schools. A sweeping statement like this is easily made, but let us look carefully at the facts. If we examine the Authorized Course of Study for Elementary Schools (see 2nd page of cover of the School Register published in your office) we find that in the 1st and 2nd grades, or the youngest pupils, almost no books are required, and comparatively little actual study. In grade 3, the number of books and studies naturally increase, and passing to the 4th or highest grade, we find the following, which can hardly be termed a very formidable list: "Book IV. (reader), spelling book, arithmetic, grammar, geography, Canadian history, copy-book, blank book, drawing-book, (the last three being simply exercise books, costing, in all, 25 cents), and by examining the list of studies of grade 4, we find that these books cover all that is required in the way of study or work. Elementary French may be taken if desired, in which case another book may be needed. Now, how much have we here beyond what you have specified as essential? Only Canadian history and drawing, neither of which is intended as a daily exercise. *There are no other lessons required to be learned.* In view of these facts, it strikes me that your complaint is decidedly overdrawn. I may suggest that in my view, very much of the complaint of "crowding" arises from the willingness, if not anxiety, of parents, (too often encouraged by the teachers), to press children forward into grades beyond their age and capacity; the unavoidable alternative being poor work or overwork.

The grievance of the "frequent changing of books," so far at least as the elementary schools are concerned, is wholly imaginary, as there has been almost no changing since the introduction of the present authorized series, some eight years ago. I venture to assert that for no other period of equal length during the past 35 years, has there been as much quiet and stability in text-books as during the last five years. In fact, it is a question whether more change would not be advantageous. An occasional changing of school books is not necessarily an evil. It is a very general opinion among experienced educators that a period of five or six years is as long as one series of readers should be used. "But," you will say, "think of the expense." True, the expense is worthy of consideration, but it is not the only point to be