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## THE CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL.

An Educational Journal devoted to the Literature, Science, Art, and the advancement of the teaching profession in Canada.

—TERMS—

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At a recent meeting of the Board of Education, newly organized in the North-West Territories, Gage's Readers, Copy-books, Arithmetics, Grammars, Map Geography, and other Text-books were adopted for exclusive use throughout the different Territories. A short time ago these books were authorized for use in the Province of British Columbia.

It is time for trustees and teachers to commence planning for the approaching Arbor Day. A good beginning was made in many places last year. It is to be hoped that much more will be accomplished on the coming 7th of May. The opportunity will be an excellent one, not only for tree and flower planting, but for removing every unsightly object and incumbrance from school grounds, for repairing out buildings and fences, for clearing up and levelling grounds, and beautifying things generally.

The *Mail* is just now making a vigorous onslaught on the methods of the Education Department. It is unfortunate for the public interest that the policy of the Minister affords so much room for hostile criticism. The book-making machine which has been set in operation is utterly indefensible. The very idea of having text-books made to order, and that too, not by open competition, but by writers selected for the purpose by the Minister of Education, borders on the absurd. Were

Mr. Ross a second Solomon he could not select by intuition the best man to make a drawing-book, or grammar, or a work on history, or hygiene. Such a method is calculated to expose our school system to the ridicule of educators in other countries. The forthcoming text-book in history, in which the outlines of both British and Canadian history are to be compressed into one little primer, is but a sample of the absurdities to be looked for under such a plan.

If we must be shut up to a one-book system, why not adopt the common-sense principle of free competition to secure the best? The schools, the tax-payers, have a right to the best. How is the best to be chosen? Certainly by no one man, though he were a prodigy in all the sciences, arts and philosophies. The rational method would surely be to leave the choice to disinterested committees made up of educated men and practical educators, the latter well represented. These should have the whole range of authors, British, American and Canadian, to select from. Arrangements, too, should be made to have when practicable, Canadian editions of the chosen books, published on honest principles and with free competition. In this way alone, the best interests of the schools,—the first and highest consideration—would be secured and, at the same time, the most healthful and enduring stimulus be given to Canadian authors and publishers.

Dr. Johnson is credited with having said, "I would rather have the rod to be the general terror to children, to make them learn, than tell a child, 'If you do this or that, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters,'" and to have argued the point as follows: "The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority you lay the foundation of lasting mischief—you make brothers and sisters hate each other." The gruff old philosopher may have been right or wrong in his preference of one had motive force to another. It does not seem to have occurred to him, or in fact to many in his time, that there might be a more excellent way than either, one free from the moral objections of both methods. Is it a modern discovery that a thirst for knowledge is innate in a healthy mind, and that the child who is properly treated in early years will take to study as naturally and eagerly as to tempting fruit or athletic games? Have all our readers made the discovery for themselves?

The British House of Commons is just now engaged in the discussion of one of the most important and most difficult questions that has ever come before it. Mr. Gladstone's speech in introducing the Government's Irish Bill, on Thursday last, was such a speech as was expected from him, and such a speech as, it is probably not too much to say, no other man in the world could have made. That the scheme is