

to parents a larger discretion as to the selection of a school for their children, and giving greater permanency to the situation of teachers. In several of the neighbouring States, where the system of Township Boards of School Trustees has been established in the place of School Section Trustees, the advantage is said to be immense. The Township Board would, of course, appoint for each school a Visiting Committee of three, who would visit the school from time to time, and report annually, or oftener, its state and progress to the Board.

The *third* would be, to consider whether each Municipal Council should not be invested with power to bring to account and punish by fine, or require to work on the roads, parents who do not send their children, between the ages of seven and fifteen years, to some school, at least four months in the year.

The *fourth* subject proposed was the alteration in the constitution of the County Boards of Public Instruction, so as to simplify the present mode of granting certificates to common school teachers.

THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUTH OF CANADA THE GREAT OBJECT IN VIEW—GENERAL REMARKS.

The object which the Government, the Legislature, and the Department has in view, is the education of the youth of Canada, and it is one in which every person is concerned. Our system of government is so framed that in proportion to a man's property, so do his interests and burthens of responsibility to it increase, and the greater a man's property, the greater is his personal interest in the training and moral culture of the rising generation. Great pains have been taken in framing and in the administration of the School system of Canada, not only by visiting other countries and inquiring into their system of education, and adopting what was best in them, but also by visiting the various counties of Upper Canada and inquiring into the circumstances and wishes of the respective communities. It had been felt by him that a mere theoretical system was not sufficient, inasmuch as different communities, subject to the constantly changing influences of a progressive country, require changes in their educational institutions. For it must not be forgotten that though the general system of law and government are in many respects essentially the same, they must ever be adapted to the peculiar feelings and interests of the people for whose protection and benefit they are instituted; and the same rule applies to the educational system. In order, therefore, to obtain a full insight into the wants of the people, he had thought it best from time to time to hold meetings similar to this, which was the fourth visit of the kind which he had made.* It is assumed by all that it is the duty of every country to educate its youth, and it is also assumed that it is the duty of every parent to co-operate in doing so. If a father were to mutilate his child he would be liable to the penal laws of the land, but how far more culpable that man who mutilates the immortal part of his child's nature, who by neglecting to do what lies in his power to provide for his mental training, reduces him almost to the level of a barbarian!

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN ONE OF THE FIRST DUTIES OF PARENTS.

Dr. Ryerson next proceeded to urge parents to consider it as one of their first duties to give their children such an education as would enable them to take care and make a proper use of property that might be left to them, or what they might make themselves by their own industry. He was rather against parents leaving their sons large fortunes, as it led them to be idle and careless, and sometimes dissipated, but considered it to the advantage of parents to settle a dowry on their daughters, as they generally took better care of it. He said he knew many young men who had received large fortunes from their parents, and had sunk into obscurity, while those that had been brought up to industrious pursuits in agriculture, &c., had made fortunes for themselves, and were among the first men of the country.

INFLUENCE OF AN ATTRACTIVE SCHOOL-HOUSE AND A GOOD TEACHER.

It was highly desirable to remove, as far as possible, all obstacles that might interfere with the education of youth. The very place of instruction should be rendered as attractive as possible. If the school-house should happen to be the meanest house in the neighbourhood, as it not unfrequently was, the impression of the children attending it would naturally be that it was one of the meanest things in the world to attend school. It was requisite that the interior of the school-house should be rendered as clean and comfortable as possible. There was much true philosophy in the erection of a good school-house. Teachers, also, should be the most attractive persons in the estimation of their pupils. They should see to it that they conducted themselves in their bearing and their whole manner towards the school children as kindly as possible; for the art of kindness would surely make itself felt, and when teachers had secured

the affection of their pupils, so as to command respect and attention, they would be in a position to exert the best influences for the education of the youth in their charge.

RESPECTFUL TREATMENT OF THE TEACHER BY PARENTS.

It is also necessary for parents to speak of the teacher in terms of esteem, and to treat him or her as respectfully as possible. If children heard their parents speak disrespectfully of the teacher, it was not likely that they could receive any good from him. It was frequently the case that parents themselves raised an impediment to the instruction of their children by speaking disrespectfully of the teacher. Even should circumstances arise that would render the teacher's removal from the school desirable, yet that impression should not be given to the children, while the teacher held his situation in the school. Parents should exert every effort to call forth the religious, moral, and intellectual powers of their children. It was of importance that both teacher and parents should combine and use every endeavor for the advancement of the education of youth.

MODIFICATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM DESIRABLE.

The subject of education has very properly engaged the attention of our Government to a very considerable extent, and has formed a prominent part in their policy. Changing circumstances render constant modifications necessary. What is applicable at one time is not applicable at another, because as before remarked, it was necessary from time to time to introduce alterations which the progress of the country rendered necessary. Wants not originally felt when our School System was first inaugurated, have been felt of late, and those wants have been supplied. We had now advanced another step when it seemed proper once again to pause and inquire whether anything could be done to improve the system and render it more efficient. It was believed that hitherto the system had been on the whole decidedly popular, and the progress so far highly satisfactory.

STATISTICAL PROGRESS OF THE UPPER CANADA SCHOOL SYSTEM.

When the school system commenced, 96,756 pupils were taught; now there were no less than 385,800. The amount expended for the payment of teachers during the first year of the present system was \$206,856, last year the salaries of teachers amounted to \$1,080,666. The amount expended for all purposes during the first year was \$295,897. Last year no less a sum than \$1,330,608, was expended for educational purposes. These statistics are highly gratifying, showing that a very great advancement has been made in our educational system. It was to be hoped that the period was not far distant when the beneficial effects of this extended education would be felt throughout the country, and that complaints might no longer be heard of the nature "with which" said Dr. Ryerson, "I have been assailed during the past week," of the inefficiency of persons appointed to municipal offices, and other important offices of public trust. The number of schools in operation when the present system came into force was 2,610, now there are 4,360. There are other matters connected in some degree with our School System, the progress of which was equally gratifying, and as the increase in school house accommodations, the number of maps, &c., which had been procured, and the establishments of libraries. The latter was an institution of comparatively recent date, but no less than 212,423 volumes of instructive reading had been put into circulation in connection therewith.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION OF VAGRANT CHILDREN.

One subject which had lately commanded a very great deal of consideration, both from the Government and from the people, was the question as to the course to be adopted in reference to children who were entirely neglected by their parents. The word "compulsory" he knew had not the most agreeable sound in the ears of many individuals. It was thought by some to be an interference with personal liberty and parental right. But the proposal was founded on public expediency and the principles of justice between man and man. The system was carried out with greater rigour in Switzerland, which was even a more democratic country than the United States, than in any other part of Europe or America. The Swiss felt that the general education of the people was so essential to the maintenance of their liberty, that they looked upon man as an enemy to the country, and as liable to the penal laws of the Canton in which he lived, who did not educate his children. The same regulation existed in some of the Eastern States. The principal on which compulsory education was founded was this: The ratepayer justly said,—"If the state compels me to pay taxes for the education of all the youth in the state, I have a right to demand of the state in return that it shall see that all the youth are educated." If the parent were so inhuman as to deny the child the education which was so necessary for the proper discharge of its future duties, the community had a right to step in between the unnatural parent and the defenceless child, to secure to the child its inherent rights.

* Viz.: in 18 , 1853, and 1860, see account of the proceedings at these Conventions in the *Journal of Education* for those years.