

ELECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS.

[In the article last month, "Appointment of Trustees," "our" should have read "one"—the idea intended to be conveyed being that the government should have retained the power of the appointment of *one* trustee in each country district.]

In returning to the subject of school boards, it may at first be said in reply to the *St. John Sun's* remarks, that the REVIEW did not state that all the appointments of trustees made by the common council had been from its own body. It further did not refer to the Blair government or any other government, but all governments since the inception of the school law.

The REVIEW believes that the founders of the school law builded wisely. Education is not a matter of district, village, or even town control, but is the concern of the state. Because this or that constituency does not support the government, should not entitle it to control its education any more than other affairs. Some very able men, both in Canada and the United States, have even sought to make education a national concern. With the exception of Australia, France, and perhaps Japan, which countries exercise entire control over the schools, appointing teachers and paying all charges with the proceeds of direct taxation, there is no country which gives greater state aid to education in proportion to population than New Brunswick. The province contributes each year \$160,000; the counties (under the control of chief superintendent) \$90,000; the districts \$200,000. It will be observed that the province in all contributes considerably more than the districts. Take the example of a first-class teacher engaged in the city of St. John. She will receive for the first year from the trustees, \$200, from province, \$100, and from county, say \$75. In what are known as poor districts in the country, from two-thirds to three-quarters of the support of the schools comes from the state. In the United States, on the contrary, very little, and in most cases, no state aid is given to the common schools. Each district is a law unto itself as regards support, text books and instruction. In England, also, the state aid is understood to be small, but the government exercises control far greater than the appointment of trustees—it exercises the right of inspecting private as well as public schools. The inspectors have far greater powers there than here. In Ontario, state grants are made to the municipalities, not to the teachers, but the state exercises the closest supervision over the expenditure of the money.

For the information of the *Globe*, the opinion of the *N. Y. School Journal*, one of the most influential educational papers in the United States, is given in another place, as to the "coming school board." It may be added, that Massachusetts and two or three other states, may bear a fair comparison with the provinces of the Dominion in the matter of education; but Ontario, in every case that an opportunity has been afforded at exhibitions, has taken the palm even from these states. In the United States about ninety per cent. of the teachers are yet untrained—though great efforts of late are being made to provide for the training of teachers. The color line is drawn in that land of boasted freedom and equality; and in the state of Maine, it is said, that in some of the country districts, the boarding of the teacher is put up at auction much in the same way, that to our lasting disgrace, the parish poor are still dealt with in some parts of New Brunswick. The United States in as far as facilities for the education of the masses are concerned, is yet behind Canada.

MORE UNIFORMITY NEEDED.

This is the age of combination and system in all lines of commercial activity. Why should it not be the same in the domain of intellectual and educational efforts? There is a lack of unity in our school systems—in all grades, as well as in colleges and universities. Is this necessary or wise? Principals know that pupils coming from the schools of other cities to theirs, rarely fit into the corresponding grades. They are in advance in grammar, and behind in arithmetic. They are ignorant of history, for instance, required in the sixth grade, and know all the grammar of the seventh. To say a pupil is in the seventh grade, means one degree of advancement in St. John, another in Halifax, another in Charlottetown, in nearly every branch. Pupils moving from one city to another are "put back" for some one branch. How can this evil, for such it is, be remedied?

Educators ought to be able to agree upon the relative amount of grammar, geography, history, and natural science, that should be required to pass from each grade. How shall this system be determined? Let the inter-provincial convention be revived. One meeting should not suffice for the interchange of ideas of the educationists of the Maritime provinces. Let provision be made at it for the outlining of a uniform course of study for the provinces, both in city and country. At such a convention, efforts might be made to secure uniform licensing of teachers, and interchange of teachers between the provinces.