

TEACHING DAYS.—The number of teaching days for the current term, closing April 30th, is 116. The number of Teaching Days for the ensuing term, beginning May 1st, is 100.

ADDITIONAL HOLIDAYS.—To enable teachers more conveniently to aid Trustees in preparing returns for transmission to the Inspector, the Council of Public Instruction has been pleased to order that hereafter "the 30th of April and the 31st of October shall be holidays in the Public Schools, and when either of these days shall fall on Saturday or Sunday, the preceding Friday shall be a holiday." At the request of the Board of School Commissioners, the Public Schools of the City of Halifax are excepted from the operation of this Regulation.

SATURDAY AS A TEACHING DAY.—The Council of Public Instruction has ordered that to existing regulations defining the limits within which school may be kept on Saturdays (see Manual page 70), there shall be added the following: "Provided that nothing contained in these Regulations shall prevent a teacher from teaching on Saturdays in order to make up for *not more than two teaching days* necessarily lost at the beginning of the term in travelling from a distant section in which he (or she) had been previously engaged."

ARBOR DAY.—To encourage the proper adornment of school grounds, and thereby a cultivation of a taste for the beautiful in nature on the part of the pupils, the Council of Public Instruction has ordered the publication of the following Regulation:

"On such one of the first thirty teaching days of the summer term, as according to season, weather, or other circumstances may be deemed most suitable. Trustees are authorized to have substituted for the regular school exercises of pupils, the planting by the latter of trees, shrubs and flowers on the grounds surrounding the school-house. The day devoted to this purpose shall be known and entered in the Register as 'Arbor Day,' and when duly observed full credit will be given for it in the apportionment of public funds, on the basis of the actual attendance of pupils as ascertained by roll call at the beginning of the exercises, or other convenient time during their progress. Additional value and interest should be imparted by mingling with the practical duties of the occasion short addresses from the teacher and other competent persons and the æsthetic and economic importance of arboriculture. During the summer visitation, Inspectors shall take note of all schools in connection with which 'Arbor Day' has been observed."

Our native trees grow so freely in the woods that we are apt to suppose that they are merely to be taken up by the roots and transplanted, to start at once into a vigorous growth as before. This is a mistake. Great care should be taken in digging up the trees to preserve the fibrous roots; long runners should be cut across with a sharp knife, and not torn. All trees thrive best in well-drained soil, varying from sandy loam to clay. A clay loam suits all descriptions. The holes for the trees should always be made before the trees are brought on to the grounds. They should be too large rather than too small. In filling in, the better soil from near the surface should be returned first, so as to be nearer the roots, but where the soil is at all sterile, and generally there should be put below and around the roots, some well-rotted compost, mixed with sand and sandy loam, in order to promote the growth of the rootlets. In setting the tree it should be placed a little deeper than it stood before, and the roots should be so spread out that none are doubled. When finally planted the tree should be tied to a stout stake in such a way as to prevent chafing of the bark. Some mulch or stable litter should be thrown around the stem to protect the roots from drought. Stirring the ground is preferred by some cultivators to mulching. In transplanting evergreens, the roots should not be exposed to air or light—especially to the heat of the sun—more than can be helped.

Several varieties of shrubs planted together in clumps produce a very pleasing effect, while the care of judiciously arranged flower beds will be to the children an important means of education.

There will be found subjoined some practical suggestions which will be serviceable to those who wish to make the occasion a really profitable one. A day (this year Friday, May 8th) has been fixed by the Maritime Provincial Grange as an "Arbor Day" within the jurisdiction of that body, for the purpose of impressing on the public mind the importance of restoring and preserving our forestal resources. Where the season suits, there might appropriately be a co-operation of the Grangers and the school authorities.

In selecting trees, it is well to avoid those that bear flowers or edible fruits, as such in the flowering and fruiting season are apt to meet with injury from ignorant or mischievous passers-by, and to offer temptation to the pupils. Butternuts and Horse Chestnuts are not to be commended as shade trees. The Balsam Fir is objectionable from the liability of its balsam to stain the hands and clothing. Deciduous or broad-leaved trees are easily grown, their

fibrous roots rendering transplanting a comparatively simple operation. If care is taken, the young saplings of the elm, maple and ash, as found in the undergrowth of the forest, can be transplanted without difficulty.

No school-grounds should be without a suitable number and variety of the standard deciduous trees. However, during the winter season they are bare and unattractive, and afford little or no shelter. On the other hand, evergreens, such as Spruces, Pines, Hemlocks, and Cedars, retain their foliage and provide a shelter as useful in winter as it is grateful in summer. Trees should always be planted according to a definite plan, being arranged either in curves or straight lines, according to circumstances, and with an obvious relation to the building and fences. They should never be placed so near the school-house as to interfere with the free play of light and air.

TEXT BOOKS.

Comment.—In performing the duty of selecting and prescribing text-books for the Public Schools, the Council of Public Instruction has availed itself as fully as possible of the knowledge and experience of those who are engaged in the practical work of education. The sole aim of recent modifications has been to secure, at reasonable cost, a series of texts, *adapted for use in schools*. Change in authorized books is in itself a very undesirable thing; and it is hoped and believed that matters may remain where they are now for years to come, without substantial alteration.

The general effect of recent changes has been to largely and permanently reduce the cost of text books, especially to pupils pursuing an extended course. The Council is engaged in inquiries and efforts with a view to still further diminish expense by securing, wherever practicable, a lowering in price and an improvement in the mechanical quality of the prescribed texts.

Inspectors and teachers are reminded:

1. That the Course of Study for Common Schools encourages an economical expenditure for text-books by providing a system of oral instruction for junior classes. Too many teachers try to satisfy themselves in respect to their more youthful pupils by placing in their hands text-books not needed in any case, and worse than useless when unaccompanied by proper oral exposition. A text-book should not be required for a child until he is prepared to use it intelligently.

2. That the regulation which makes it illegal and improper for a teacher to introduce unauthorized texts, by no means hinders him from giving his pupils the benefit of other treatises to whose explanations he may attach importance. The progressive teacher will always have such aids within reach, and will so use them as to impart variety and interest to his instructions.

LIST OF TEXT BOOKS PRESCRIBED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS, WITH NAMES OF PUBLISHERS.

ENGLISH.

Reading and Spelling. (1.) The Royal Series (Thomas Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh and London.)
(2.) The Maritime Series (Wm. Collins, Sons & Co., Glasgow and London.)
(3.) The Spelling Book Superseded—*English Edition*. (Sullivan Bros.)

NOTE.—In sections where French is the vernacular language, and the Trustees desire that English should also be taught, the French-English Readers of the Royal Series will be found very serviceable.

Grammar and Composition. (1.) English Grammar for Schools (A. & W. Mackinlay.)
(2.) Dalgleish's Introductory Text Book of English Composition (A. & W. Mackinlay.)
(3.) Dalgleish's Advanced Text Book of English Composition (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh.)

Geography. (1.) Calkin's Introductory Text Book (A. & W. Mackinlay.)
(2.) Calkin's Geography of the World (A. & W. Mackinlay.)

History. (1.) Calkin's History of British America (A. & W. Mackinlay.)
(2.) Outlines of British History (Thos. Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh and London.)
(3.) Swinton's Outlines of the World's History, Canadian Edition. (A. & W. Mackinlay.)