

the Committee will not fall to the ground from want of Government support.

In fine, a considerable extension and modification of the present system is advocated in this report, the reporters recommending that the Kew Committee should take charge of the whole branch. We shall only remark that if they are willing to do so, it could not be put into better hands.

We indeed rejoice to think that there is now a likelihood of a systematic and earnest pursuit of meteorology, under the auspices of the British Government, and especially are we glad to think self-recording instruments are likely to be established. In this respect meteorology is behind terrestrial magnetism, although the former is the more popular and immediately practical science of the two. But when a beginning has once been made by our Government, it is almost certain that it will be followed up by the Continental nations; so that possibly at no distant date Europe may be sprinkled over with observatories in each of which self-recording meteorological instruments are at work. But while we heartily agree with the conclusions arrived at by the Committee, we hardly think they have done justice to the late Admiral Fitzroy. Of his sincerity of mind and scientific earnestness there can be no question. There can be as little question that his system of storm-warnings has been of great public benefit—has, in fact, been the saving of many lives. His was the bold strong hand of a pioneer that quarried the stone—it will remain with others to rear the edifice. If in another branch of his work he wanted method, he himself was the chief sufferer. His genius and his untiring energy have conduced to the lasting benefit of his country. The fault he had have only hastened his own untimely and lamented death.—*North British Review.*

EDUCATION

Educational Progress in Nova Scotia.

NEARLY two years have now elapsed since the first free school act came into operation in Nova Scotia. This measure, passed in the session of 1864, changed completely the basis of our educational system, and its introduction may therefore be properly regarded as marking an epoch in the history of public education among us. With this as a stand point, it may not be uninteresting to note a few of the prominent features and leading facts connected with the history of legislation on this question. Going back to the year 1847 we find EARL GREY sending voluminous despatches on this subject for the consideration of our Legislature. In these he strongly urged the establishment of a Normal School and of a liberal system of common schools, as matters of the greatest moment to the welfare of the people. The public men of the day felt the importance of the considerations urged upon their attention, and some changes were made in the existing provisions of the school law. Among other steps in advance, the office of Provincial Superintendent of Education was created, and in 1851 Dr. DAWSON entered upon the duties of that position. In one of his first reports to the Legislature he says: "The work is greater than I can fully perform, and the deficiencies in the popular education of the country are of a most formidable character." He pressed upon the Legislature the necessity of adopting assessment as the only reliable means of supporting education, and of making the schools free to all pupils; also the immediate establishment of a normal school for the training of teachers. The educational committee of that year reported that "it would be a waste of time and scarcely respectful to the intelligence of the House if the committee were to enlarge upon the benefits that would result to the country if our whole system of education were founded upon a permanent fund, raised by assessment, under the sanction of law." The committee recommended, also, public agitation of the question, and expressed 'the earnest hope that it would be kept free of all party conflict, and be viewed solely on its own intrinsic merits.' Dr. DAWSON laboured assiduously to elevate the schools of the country, and especially to enlist popular feeling in favour of what

appeared to him to be the only true basis of support,—assessment. Impatient of the apathy of the people, and weary of waiting upon the unsuccessful movements of the Legislature, after an incumbency of three years, he selected another sphere of labour, and gave to a sister Province the benefit of his talents. Then followed the division of the Province into two districts, C. D. RANDALL, Esq., M. A., was appointed Superintendent over the western district, and HUGH MUNROE, Esq., over the eastern. From 1855 to 1864, the Rev. Dr. FORRESTER filled the joint office of Principal of the Provincial Normal School and Superintendent of Education. With what enthusiasm he carried forward the labours of his predecessors, is fresh in the minds of all. The Normal College, which had been erected through the exertions of Dr. DAWSON, was immediately equipped, and the Model School established. As Principal of these, Dr. FORRESTER sought to infuse new life into the teachers of our common schools, and to elevate the business of teaching into a profession; while as Superintendent of Education he laboured to persuade both people and Parliament of the necessity of the immediate adoption of assessment as essential to such a system of schools as the well-being of the Province demanded. Neither he nor his predecessors laboured in vain. An educational spirit was kept alive, and the inherent weakness of the system they were compelled to administer was so far counterbalanced as to admit of a degree of prosperity. The people, moreover, were prepared, by an agitation extending over a period of fourteen years, for the adoption of assessment, so far as such preparation was possible apart from the actual and visible operation of the principle.

But the day on which the census of 1861 was opened, the hope of effecting the education of the people of this Province, through the agency of the system then in operation, faded instantly and forever from the minds of thoughtful men.—Every one was appalled at the spectacle of ignorance which the country presented. Out of 284,092 persons in the Province over five years of age, 81,469 could not read a printed page, and 114,877 could not write their own names. Here was overwhelming failure. And why? Not because famine, pestilence, or war, had ravaged the land, and left this as one of its fearful memorials; for every branch of industry yielded with wonted constancy a moderate if not an abundant return, and health and peace had been enjoyed by the people. It could not be that the harshness of legal constraint had chilled the generous devotion of the people to a cause so intimately connected with the prosperity of all; for each individual knew no control in this matter but his own will. Fees, subscriptions, or permissive assessments, each supplemented by provincial aid, were the prescribed modes of supporting schools. Nor can we affirm that the failure was chiefly due to the lack of general information as to the importance of education; for ten years of laborious effort had been expended in directing the attention of the people to this very point. There has been, and there can be but one adequate answer given to the question. The mode of supporting the schools was weak, uncertain, and insufficient. It was based upon the error that the maintenance of a thorough system of schools is a matter that concerns those only who have children to educate, whereas it is also truly a matter of public concern. Ignorance, in its results, is a moth consuming the wealth of every community—a leech constantly depleting the arms of industry—a vulture preying upon the very vitals of society. All suffer loss and injury by its continued existence, and all in each community ought to combine to expel it from every home.

Our public men were not slow to deduce the great lesson taught by the census of 1861, and the year 1864 witnessed the passage of the school law already referred to. It increased the grants for educational purposes, declared schools to be free, and encouraged the principle of assessment by providing a bonus of twenty-five per cent. on the provincial grant for sections adopting it. The Principal of the Normal School was relieved from the necessity of discharging the laborious duties of two offices that his undivided energies might be applied to the preparation of teachers; and the present incumbent was appointed to the office of Super-