Roman Catholic Seperate School supporters so assessed are not liable for any rates levied for public school purposes, and union sections formed of part of a township and a village or town are not liable for the general public school rate required to be levied under the provisions of section 66 of the Public Schools Act.

School Section Arbitrators.

26.—J. M. D.—Arbitrators were appointed to consider certain bounds between School Section No. 1 and Union S. S. Nos. 2 and 6, A and O. They met but did not do any business, as they say that S. S. Nos. 12 and 18, A and O, were petitioning for arbitrators to be appointed to consider changing their bounds with the above No. 1. If they had concluded their arbitration at their first meeting it would have been a disadvantage to Nos. 12 and 18, owing to the five years' limit. Had they any right to postpone the arbitration, causing double the expense, or had they the right to allow $10.00 to the clerk of the township? They do not give any reason for so doing.

The arbitrators were not compelled to make an award, and their order to clerk would be subject to approval of the council or Trustee Board and might be disallowed.

Change in School Section—Liability for Debt.

27.—W. W. D.—No. 11 R. C. S. S., formed December 6th, 1889, 31 ratepayers. In January, 1890, 15 withdrew on section 47, S. S. Act, 1887, returning to Public School, No. 11. In 1893, No. 11, R. C. S. S., contracted debt to build. In 1894 conditional compromise effected P. S. No. 11 trustees selling to R. C. S. S. No. 11 without calling meeting of ratepayers. After three months R. C. S. S. No. 11 returned to their indebted school house. No notice of this compromise placed on file with clerk. (One ratepayer still remained in P. S. No. 11.)

In 1895, those that formed the compromise from P. S. No. 11 were assessed to R. C. S. S. No. 11 unknown to them, and paid the taxes under protest, and in 1896 gave the notice per section 47, R. C. S. S. No. 11, and had themselves assessed to other sections around them. Those who went to P. S. No. 10 had no action taken by council uniting them to said No. 10. In 1896 those who joined P. S. No. 10 were assessed to No. 11, R. C. S. S. again, and also some that joined other sections, and again paid taxes under protest. In 1897 P. S. No. 10 part withdrew to original P. S. No. 11, after being out some two years.

1. Are they responsible for debt of R. C. S. S. No. 11, made previous to compromise?
2. Do they belong to No. 11 or S?
3. Is No. 11 P. S. still a legal section by virtue of one ratepayer, no action having been taken to dissolve it?

1. Yes, the S. S. section as constatuted in 1893 is liable.

2 and 3. We cannot undertake to give an opinion upon the other questions without knowing what steps were taken.

Returning Officer not Candidate.

28.—Can a Clerk act as returning-officer being at the same time a nominee for trustee? The municipal and trustee elections are held at the same time and in a municipality not divided into wards. The clerk would be officiating at his own election.

The clerk is returning officer, not eligible as a candidate for position of trustee.

Pat (kneeling beside the victim)—So his breath won't leave his body, of course. —*London Fun.*

County Poorhouses in Ontario.

(By H. A. Harper, M. A.)

That society is bound, in the interest of its own self-respect and safety, to make some kind of provision for those of its members who from early improvidence, adverse circumstances or infirmity of body or mind have no other means of support is no longer an open question, except in the minds of the most extreme individualistic theorist. It is in the matter of the distribution of that relief that the real practical pauper problem of to-day arises.

Neither the justice of state relief nor the form it should take seems to have been a serious point of controversy in the minds of the men who placed upon the statute book the regulations dealing with the problem in this province. The practically unanimous recognition of state relief in some form by modern states left no doubt but that some steps should be taken when once the growth of a considerable pauper class made itself apparent. The evils that had resulted in England and elsewhere from the abuses of outdoor relief, and the existence of county poorhouses in several of the states across the border practically determined the form which our system would take.

STATUTORY REGULATIONS.

In tracing the statutory regulations bearing upon the county poorhouse question, so far as Ontario is concerned, we need not go back more than thirty years, as the first institution of the kind was erected in the year 1869.

The pre-confederation regulations are to be found in 29 and 30 Victoria, cap. 51, sections 413 to 416. This act, although it has since been amended in many important respects, outlines broadly the policy of the government in the matter of poor relief. The plain intention is that the helpless and friendless poor shall be provided for by indoor relief in industrial homes erected by the various county municipalities. The act is mandatory in tone, a limit of two years being allowed, but the initiative is left with the county councils, which are to secure the land, build the houses, make regulations (with certain restrictions) with regard to the same, appoint the inspectors and other officials, and provide for the maintenance of the institution.* In thus making the treatment of the poor a local concern, the usual practice has been followed, a practice which is based upon the sound principle of public finance, that such matters in which national interests are only indirectly involved, and in which intimate personal knowledge is of relatively high importance, should be placed under local control in the division of the functions of the state.

The power to legislate in regard to poor law management was transferred by subsections 7 and 8 of section 92 of the British North American Act to the provincial legislatures. One of the first acts of the new Legislature of Ontario was to modify the severity of the act of 29 and 30 Victoria. The establishment of houses of industry was made optional with the county councils and the limit on the basis of population was swept away. This change in the attitude of the government was due to a desire to avoid coercive measures rather than to any doubt of the efficacy of the institution. Indeed, we had from time to time evidences of their warmest sympathy with the movement. It was found that in some counties several municipalities were more favorably disposed than others. By the act of 51 Vic., cap. 28, sec. 18, such municipalities are empowered to build a poorhouse and admit other municipalities subsequently to its privileges on such terms as might be agreed upon.

But the most important act in its results, as well as the one which most clearly proves the sympathy of the legislature, is that of 1890 (53 Vic., cap. 78). The preamble of this act is significant: "Whereas it is desirable to encourage erection and establishment by county municipalities of houses of industry and refuge for the care and custody of the aged, helpless and poor, therefore," etc. The act provides for a grant out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the province of a sum of money not more than $4,000 and not exceeding one-fourth of the amount actually expended by the county in the purchase of land and erection of buildings thereon. The farm must consist of at least forty-five acres, and the aid is to be subject to the favorable report of the Inspector of Asylums and Public Charities of Ontario. The appropriations are to be made by order-in council ratified by the assembly.

For some time attention had been called to the bad effect upon children of confinement in these institutions, where they were taught the pauper trade. The evil had grown to an alarming extent. During the year 1894 there were fifteen children in the York County House of Refuge, while in each of the counties of Norfolk and Waterloo the number under ten years of age was seven. It was largely as the result of pressure brought to bear by the new Department for the Better Protection of Friendless and Dependent Children, that the act of April 16, 1895, was passed. This act, which took effect on July 1, 1895, provides that no child between the ages of two and sixteen years shall be received or boarded in any house or institution for the reception of paupers or other dependent adults.

The latest act is that of 59 Vic., cap. 75, which provides that in the case of the grant not amounting to $4,000 it may be supplemented until the maximum is reached, should subsequent improvements warrant it.

To be continued.

* The acts dealing with county poorhouses in Ontario are as follows: 29 and 30 Vic., c. 51, ss. 413-6; 31 Vic., c. 30, s. 42; 46 Vic., c. 18, s. 459; 51 Vic., c. 28, s. 18; 52 Vic. c. 36, s. 17; 53 Vic., c. 78; 58 Vic., c. 52, s. 11; 59 Vic., c. 75.