

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
FOR ONTARIO, FOR THE YEAR 1882.
Printed by Order of the Legislative As-
sembly, by C. Blackett Robinson, Toronto.

(Second Notice.)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EDUCATION DE-
PARTMENT DURING THE YEAR 1882.

THE first important subject that meets us in this part of the Minister's Report, is the course of study laid down for the Public Schools. Twelve years ago both the Programme of Study and the Time-table prescribed by the Education Department were made obligatory. Subsequently, only the programme was made binding, and now we are told with regard to the new programme that, "The subjects therein respectively comprised are to be taken as obligatory upon all Public School Boards and Trustees, so far as the circumstances of their schools, in the judgment of the respective Boards or Trustees, will allow." This, we suppose, is the way in the Circumlocution Office of saying that the Boards and Trustees may do as they like. They may "in their judgment" omit from the programme, for instance, one of the three R's, and put in its place Elementary Physics, or the Principles of Agriculture. They may, under the same guidance, curtail the programme to any extent they choose. It remains to be seen whether the judgment of Boards and Trustees generally is so unerring as to render it safe to entrust them with such discretionary power. The Minister evidently thinks that in the process of evolution Public School Boards have reached a higher state of development than those having charge of High Schools; for while the former are allowed to be a law to themselves in deciding upon what shall be taught, the latter have seven subjects prescribed as obligatory—to wit: English Grammar, English Literature, Composition, Dictation, History and Geography, Arithmetic and Book-keeping, Drill and Calisthenics. The Department, however, does not altogether ignore the fact that High School Boards may have some of that good

judgment with which it appears Public School Boards are so liberally endowed, for they are given nine optional subjects to choose from, and amongst these—O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, when Dr. McLellan is present!—are the optional subjects of Algebra and Euclid! Classics and Modern Languages are also placed in the same category. It will thus be seen that the prescribed programme of study for High Schools is simply a defective advanced Public School course. Since History and Geography are among the obligatory subjects, we might reasonably look for them among those prescribed for the Intermediate Examination. But that would show how little we know of the inscrutable ways of the Education Department, for they are placed after Algebra and Euclid, among the optional subjects. The following arrow from Dr. McLellan's quiver shows how he feels upon this matter, and we confess to some sympathy with him. On page 136, he says: "It is believed that nowhere out of Ontario would it be possible for a pupil to graduate from a High School, without having some knowledge of Mathematics, History and Geography." This perhaps is as far as official etiquette would allow him to go. The one redeeming feature in this High School programme is the authority given to the Head Master to regulate the work of scholars in the Upper School, and the liberty to continue there any subject of the Lower School course which he may think fit. That blight upon our High School system, "Payment by Results," has been cast into the limbo of abortive schemes, though not without a wail from Dr. McLellan, one of its originators; and the Intermediate Examination will now take its true place as a promotion examination, for the purpose of marking the progress of scholars in their High School course.

In accordance with a promise contained in last year's Report, the Minister has inserted in this one extracts from documents containing some of his decisions and opinions re-