

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION on the Public, Separate, and High Schools; also, on the Normal and Model Schools of the Province of Ontario, for the year 1878. Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly. Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, Parliamentary Printer.

As if to deprecate unfavourable comment upon the delay of a year in bringing out the Education Report for 1878, Mr. Crooks has shewn a praiseworthy promptness in presenting it to the Assembly at the beginning of the session. We see no reason why there should be this delay, except that dictated by official etiquette. But we have yet to learn that our local legislators take such an all-absorbing interest in education that they like to be the first to enjoy the feast of statistical tables the Report sets before them. As a matter of fact a large section of the general public take a much more active interest in the training of the young. Would it not, therefore, be a wise step on Mr. Crooks' part to recognize the fact, by making public his Report as soon as he has it ready, whether the Legislature is sitting or not? It would then be less an historical document and more one of a live, current interest, the discussion of which might lead to practical results. A great portion of its contents, as they appear now, either have sunk into the limbo of oblivion, or have become stale with the growth of a year's mould upon them.

The number of pupils between the ages of five and sixteen years attending the public schools in 1878 was 467,433, of other ages 21,582, making a total attendance of 489,015 out of a school population of 492,360 between the ages of five and sixteen years. The number reported between seven and twelve years of age as not attending any school during four months of the year is

27,415. A decrease from the previous year is thus shewn of school population of 2,444, of pupils attending school, 1,845; and an increase of those who do not attend any school of 1,441. Our readers will observe that while the returns of those attending school include all ages up to twenty-one years, those of school population take in none over sixteen years of age. But even this explanation will not account for the fact that while the difference of school population and school attendance is 24,927, a number which presumably takes in those who attend private schools, and who do not attend any school, the number returned between the ages of seven and twelve years as not attending any school for the minimum period of four months is 27,415.

This shews an enormous increase upon the number not attending school in 1877, which was 15,974, and when we come to add the increase of 1,441, as stated by the Report, to this latter number, we get 17,415. Evidently then, Mr. Crooks has not been careful with his figures when he adds, by a slip of the pen, ten thousand to the vagrant juvenile population of the Province. The average attendance was 224,588, which is a fraction under 46 in every hundred of the total number attending school. Although this is two per cent. more than it was last year, we must still regret that not one-half the scholars attending the public schools of the country derive the full benefit of the instruction they afford. In counties 44 out of every 100 attended regularly, in cities 57, and in towns 55.

When we examine Table B to ascertain the relative standing of the counties in regularity of attendance, we find Brant stands far ahead of all the others, shewing an average of 87 per cent., while Simcoe is much the lowest, having barely 20 per cent. We