

# JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

RETURNS.—BY AN INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

HAVING been somewhat employed, since the close of the School year, in the examination of Returns and preparation of Abstracts from them, and having found a very large proportion of them incorrect or incomplete in some respects, I am led to believe that some simple directions may be of service. Errors arise from several causes—the principal being carelessness, a misunderstanding of the questions, and a feeling that the labour is useless, the information required of no particular value. To the careless, my directions will be of very little service. In their case, another sort of remedy must be applied. To those who think the labour fruitless, a word may not be amiss. The importance of the subject, the worth of a thorough knowledge of the educational condition of the country cannot be over-estimated. From full and reliable statistics furnished by those who are on the spot, a large part of this knowledge must be had. If this is wanting or defective, theories must be baseless,—legislation ill-advised, hasty, hurtful. We have a system of Returns calculated to elicit such information fully. Every one of these is carefully examined—the information they contain collated and put into such form as that the Superintendent of Education, the Council of Public Instruction, the Executive, the Legislature may be fully and exactly informed, and may afford such aids, or apply such remedies, as may be required. It is only required that the people, the parties principally interested, shall furnish through their official channel, the trustees, the required data.

There are two principal classes of Reports or Returns:—Return A to be rendered at the close of each term by the Trustees of every Section in which a school has been in operation during the term. Return B, rendered annually by every section.

RETURN A.

The first blank should be filled with the name and number of the section, name of the District, and the date of the last day of the term, so that when complete it may read thus,—

For Canton, Section No. 14, District of St. Mary's.  
Term ended 31st October, 1869.

Remember not to give the date of the closing of the school, if closed before the end of the term, but of the last day of the term—April 30th or October 31st. I have frequently seen this blank filled thus:

For School Section No. 17, District of Slipville.  
Term ended September 17th, 1869.

The trustees of Slipville forgot that a District is a portion of territory under the jurisdiction of a Board of Commissioners, and that although Slipville was called prior to 1864 a School District, it is now only a School Section. Teacher's name, sex and class: rate of salary.

Some think it quite superfluous to give the sex after having given the name, forgetting that only the initial letter of the Christian name is frequently given, and that every one is not supposed to know whether J. L. Spooner is a male or female. It is also desirable to make the labour of those who examine these returns as easy as possible. It is fully explained, and I think generally understood, that it is the rate of salary for a full term, exclusive of Provincial grant, which is required—i. e., if a teacher gets \$15 for 90 days when the full term is 114 days, the answer should be \$57. If a teacher receives \$80 and board for 5 months, then the answer should be \$135.60; i. e., (96 + 39.60.) If a teacher of Grade B is engaged at the rate of \$400 per annum, including Provincial grant, the answer should be \$140—i. e., (400—60)—Table I.

In answer to 3 give the number of months attendance at the Normal School. Questions 6 and 7, as may be seen, refer only to the Assistant.

Time in Session.—Great care should be taken to answer these questions correctly. Teachers should remark that they are now required to attest to the number of days. Under 11 give all the week days other than Saturday, during which the school was in operation. Under 12 give every Saturday during which the school was in operation, if in operation 6 days in the week, Saturday making up days lost in other weeks. Under 12 give every Saturday that was only the fifth day of the week, giving the dates in the proper place. If it is more convenient in your section that the holiday should be given regularly on Monday or some other day in the week, I think it would be alto-

gether justifiable and in accordance with the regulations, to call such days Saturdays, and to treat them as such in your Return. Under 14 give the total No. of legal teaching days, your school was open according to your knowledge and understanding of the regulations. For instance, your school may have been open upon some prescribed holiday such as the Queen's birthday, you did not know it, but find out subsequently that it was a holiday. You have school on two Saturdays, being the sixth day, on two which were not the sixth day, but one of these was in the week after the other. You have had school upon every other week day except the three prescribed. Your answer should then be as follows:—

11	12	13	14
112	2	2	114

112+2+2=116, but the Queen's birthday and one illegal Saturday must be struck off. Under 15 give the time the school was in session, including forenoon and afternoon recesses. I have known these deducted which is wrong. Table 2—Pupils enrolled.—Some have not discovered that the answer to 19 should be the sum of 16, 17, 18, or of 20 and 21. A pupil is over 5 or 15 years of age immediately after reaching those periods. Thus one of the age of 5 years, 1 month, is over 5—between 5 and 15, and should be classed and counted under 17. I have been so unfortunate as to find "the grand total No. of days attended by all the pupils," very often wrong, if any reliance can be placed in the No. of days attendance placed opposite the name of each pupil. I fear to say how many were wrong last term: very sorry to say at the best carelessly wrong. I do not believe intentionally so. A teacher knows that he is about to attest to a certain statement, to swear that to the best of his knowledge it is true. He does so, but upon a very slight investigation it is found untrue. But the means of knowing were plainly, palpably within his reach. Can we not, must we not infer that one of two things is true—either the teacher does not truly estimate the nature of an oath, or that some Justice of the Peace has so far forgotten his solemn oath and obligation as to certify that which is not true. If the plan I now suggest is carefully followed, there need be no mistake. First, examine carefully the addition of the half days at the bottom of the Register, correcting errors, if any. Add these and divide the sum by two, and carry the quotient to the end of the line. Then carefully add the number of days attended by each pupil, carrying the sum into the proper column at the extreme right, add this column, when, if all the work has been correctly performed, its sum will be equal to the quotient already obtained, and the Register will have somewhat the following appearance:—

Names	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Totals
John.....	1 1	1 S	1 1	1 1	1 1	4½
Thomas.....	1 1	S S	E E	1 1	1 E	2½
George.....	W -W	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	4
	4	3	4	6	5½	11

If these are not found equal, re-examine your work until the errors are found. Some teachers have completed their work on the return, before the school was closed, estimating the attendance for a day or two, thinking they had not time enough. I can speak of but one County in which no one has less than 24 hours after the close of the term, most have two and three days, some four days. The work of making out the Return can all be done beforehand, except answering questions, 11, 11, 22, 23, 21, 75, 76,