

the Public School system, appears to show that the public sentiment of the city is strongly opposed to the Separate School system, whether as it exists in Ontario, or in the fuller development which is imminent in Manitoba, in case the decision of the Dominion Supreme Court is sustained by the British Privy Council. We pointed out, a few weeks ago, that the decision in favour of the contention of the Separate School supporters would mean much more than the establishment of the Ontario system in Manitoba, much as even that would be to be deplored. It would mean Separate Schools for the Church of England and for the Presbyterians also. This would of course be equivalent to the destruction of the Public School system in the Province, for it would be impossible for the remnants of the population to maintain an expensive Public School system for the education of their own children, while the majority would surely refuse to be taxed in their aid, after providing for the support of their own respective denominational schools. We observe that Mr. J. D. Cameron, the clear-headed young lawyer who won the seat for the Government in Winnipeg, took unequivocally, no doubt with the sanction of the Government, the position we anticipated. He outlined the Government policy as follows:—

While allowing these denominations to have their schools, while absolving them from the payment of taxes for the maintenance of Public Schools, we go farther: we will not give any grants of money to any denominational schools; we will not hand over to any power the right to tax ratepayers; we will say, you are free to maintain your schools, maintain them if you like, but we will not give you grants of money, we will not give you the power of taxation.

It is possible then that we may, at no distant day, see one of the Provinces of the Dominion trying the plan of denominational education conducted on purely voluntary principles. So far as we are aware, such a method would be unique among enlightened countries at the present day. Save for the impossibility of making school attendance compulsory, and the consequent danger that large numbers of the children of the Province might be allowed to grow up utterly illiterate, a perpetual menace to free institutions, the plan might not be a bad one. It would certainly have many advantages. It would remove the objections to religious instruction in the schools. It would, or at least might, free the teachers from the bondage and drudgery of the great machine systems which now hamper individuality and render ideal teaching impossible. But, then, it is certain that no Government could long resist the combination which would be made to compel the granting of public money in aid of the sectarian schools—a system unsound in principle and sure to be fraught with great and growing abuses in practice.

ON the 12th of December a Special Committee was appointed by a resolution of Convocation at Osgoode Hall to report upon the question of simplifying judicial proceedings in the Province by amalgamation of the different branches of the High and Divisional Courts. The Committee has lost no time in presenting an interim report, copies of which have been distributed to members of Convocation for criticisms and suggestions, prior to its consideration by Convocation on February 2. The Committee recommend, first, the abolition of the double circuits of the High Court of Justice and the holding of common sittings for trial of actions in the three divisions throughout the different cities and county towns of the Province. Such sittings should, in the opinion of the Committee, be held at certain fixed periods for each city and county town, and should be more frequent than the present sittings of Assize and Nisi Prius. In view, however, of difficulties in the way of the immediate abolition of the double circuits, especially those arising out of the pecuniary results to the judiciary, the Committee does not recommend that the change be pressed, unless with the consent of the judges, until after the next session of Parliament, and suggests that a petition should in the meantime be presented to Parliament for an increase of salary to the judges. The Committee recommends, secondly, the abolition of the separate sittings of the Divisional Court and the formation of a single Divisional Court for the disposition of cases in all the divisions of that Court as at present constituted. Such Divisional Court should, they think, be composed of not less than three judges, none of whom should be the trial judge. They further recommend that there should be sittings of this Court at least monthly, and even more frequently when necessary. For the same reasons as in the case of the High Court of Justice, the Committee would not press for decisive action in the direction of the

change proposed until after the next session of the Dominion Parliament. They are of the opinion, nevertheless, that provision might and should be made forthwith for the abolition of a double sittings for the trial of actions in the city of Toronto and that there should be one sitting only in this city for the trial of cases in all the divisions. They suggest that judges in rotation should be assigned to take such sittings of the Court for a period of at least two months each, that there should be a sittings fortnightly of the said Court for the trial of non-jury cases, and that direction and power should be given to the trial judge in his discretion, upon application of either party to an action, to order and summon a special jury for the trial of such cases as may be deemed proper therefor. They would have as now a quarterly sittings of the Court for the trial of jury and criminal cases. They further recommend that the separate weekly sittings of the Chancery Division and of the Queen's Bench and Common Pleas Divisions in single Court at Toronto should be immediately abolished, and also the separate sittings of a judge in Chambers, and that hereafter there should be only one sitting of a judge daily for the purpose of hearing all motions in single Court for all the divisions, and one daily sitting of a judge in Chambers for the hearing of all appeals or motions in all the divisions. These changes the Committee regard as not only urgently needed but quite practicable. We do not feel prepared to pronounce an opinion upon the important changes proposed in detail. But it is evident that they are generally in the direction of simplifying and facilitating judicial proceedings and will therefore commend themselves to the public on general principles. We do not know that it is desirable to make appeal to the Courts so easy as to encourage the temper which leads to litigation. But when once resort is had to judicial processes it is certainly desirable, in the interests of all concerned, that those processes be as direct and as free from delay as is compatible with due investigation of the facts and principles involved. It is usually and no doubt slanderously hinted that the lawyers themselves are mostly responsible for the law's proverbial and often interminable delays. When, therefore, they, of their own motion, set about simplifying and shortening legal processes they certainly deserve the sympathy and support of the whole community.

DURING the last few weeks a series of meetings have been held in various sections of Ontario, which, while not attracting a great deal of public attention, cannot fail to have a powerful influence upon the future of the Province. We refer to the Farmers' Institutes, in which large numbers of the farmers of the country have come together for mutual instruction. No profound knowledge of the subject is required to make it evident that these meetings are having and are destined to have a most salutary effect upon the methods of agriculturists all over the Province. Those who attend—and their numbers are evidently increasing rapidly from year to year—cannot fail to profit immensely by the increase of knowledge gained from the discussions. This profit will result scarcely less from the interchange of hints and experiences than from the lectures and talks of the scientific men and experts, some of whom are usually present. Nor will it much longer be necessary, if indeed it is at present, to bring well qualified specialists from a distance to make these discussions interesting and instructive. Thanks to the agricultural colleges and perhaps still more to the abundant literature which is being scattered broadcast, and which is year by year bringing the results of scientific study and of practical experimentation within the reach of all who have the wisdom and intelligence necessary to profit by them, there is in almost every rural district an increasing number of men who are thoroughly competent to address their neighbours and give them valuable information on various phases of agriculture, horticulture, stock-raising, cheese-making and kindred topics. In fact no man of brains, who has not failed to cultivate his powers of observation—and there are few pursuits better adapted to the cultivation of these faculties than those connected with the cultivation of the soil—can have spent a number of years in such pursuits without having become an expert in some one department of his business, and so prepared to give useful hints to others on the subject which he has made a specialty. The necessary tendency of the day in agricultural as in all other industries is towards division of labour, hence there will be a constantly increasing demand in the rural districts for men who know more about some particular line of production than others.

One of the advantages of this tendency is that it favours the growth of enthusiasm, a quality which is essential to the highest success in every department of modern industry. Nor is the fact that these Institute meetings cannot fail to become potent agencies in stimulating such enthusiasm one of the least of their many recommendations.

ONE of the most remarkable of the spontaneous movements of population in our times, and one that is causing not a little anxiety to statesmen and political economists, is the migration from the rural districts to the cities. Various causes are assigned, among which too much schooling takes first place in a good many minds. There are not wanting even those who would if they could restrict the opportunities of the many in this respect, though the educated man who could seriously favour keeping the young people of the rural districts in ignorance in order to keep them on the farms is, it may be hoped, a rare survivor of a species which ought to have become long since extinct. The movement is perfectly natural and easily understood. We doubt if it is so much to be deplored as many seem to think. It is, too, one of those movements which is sure to correct itself. Human life must always be sustained by the products of the soil. The moment the desertion of the farms begins to make itself felt in a scarcity of food products, that moment will the prices of such products begin to rise. And those prices will no sooner rise to a level which will make farming and its related occupations more profitable than most other pursuits than the return movement will commence. Well-to-do residents in cities will begin to train their sons for agricultural pursuits. And this is, it has always seemed to us, a thing most desirable in itself. There is no reason in the nature of things why the children of farmers should be shut up to the farms, or the children of tradespeople and men in professional life, to the parental callings. On the contrary it is evident that great good might result from the interchange between city and country. Possibly this is one of the final causes of the movement so many are deploring. It is well known that the tendency of city life and city pursuits is towards physical and mental deterioration, and that, on the other hand, what we regard as the more intellectual occupations are constantly receiving their most vigorous reinforcements from the sturdy brains which are the products of the country. Nature's hint is broad. Circulation is the law of health in the development of national brain and character. When the men of the cities begin to train their sons with a view to scientific and practical farming the healthy reaction will have begun and a new hope for the future of the country will have dawned.

THE murder of Sophia Handcock must, for the present at least, take its place in the large and constantly increasing catalogue of unravelled mysteries. Rarely has the perpetrator of a crime so foul and cruel managed to cover up his tracks so successfully, making his escape without leaving behind the slightest clue to either his person or his motive, unless, indeed, we believe the latter to have been petty larceny, as indicated by the disappearance of her purse and trinkets. It is impossible not to sympathize deeply with the unhappy father of the murdered woman in the unfortunate circumstances in which he has been placed. One can scarcely conceive of a more painful position than that of a loving father who, at the moment when his heart is crushed, as that of any affectionate parent must be, under the weight of a bereavement so sudden and awful, finds himself not only suspected of having himself been privy to the crime, but actually imprisoned and placed on trial on the terrible charge of having slain his daughter with his own hand. The fact that no motive save the meanest and most inadequate can be imagined adds, if anything can add, to the agony of the situation. But it by no means follows that the officers of justice by whom the unhappy Handcock was placed in this position were so much to blame as some writers in the newspapers would make it appear. There is such a thing as being the victim of circumstances. Any citizen is liable, through some concatenation of events which he is unable to foresee or control, to be placed under suspicion of having done that from which his soul would revolt. It is the first duty of the police and detective officers, when brought face to face with such a crime, to use their utmost ingenuity and skill in the effort to discover the criminal. In this case the appearances were certainly against the accused, however their evidence was offset by the antecedent improbability of the hypothesis which involved the