

"each School has been open of no less than 14 weeks, or upwards of three months in a year! The Teachers also have participated in the general improvement and delightful educational prosperity, for the males who heard themselves have severally received the handsome semi-annual increase of £15 2s., and the females £4 10s. 5d. in their salaries; and it shall be my fault if I do not make it more in succeeding years. Neither have the people been neglectful of the physical comfort of the instructors of their children, for if you critically compare my statistics with those of my able predecessor you will find there are now no less than 214 framed School Houses more than there were in 1852.

"In every point within my control or that of my Inspectors, a great improvement has taken place, notwithstanding the characteristic apathy and indifference of parents, and the forgetfulness of duty on the part of the Teachers. I still complain of irregular attendance on the part of the children; nevertheless there has been in this branch a most decided improvement. The average attendance for both sexes in 1853 was only 13, while for 1855 it is no less than 16½ for males, and 13 for females, in each School. And the gratifying increase would have been even greater had it not been for the good fortune of my predecessor, who in his calculations had only 12 for a divisor, while I have had 14, which, of course, made my result much less than it would otherwise have been!"

Such perfumed statements, gentlemen, might be extended over many pages, without doing the slightest violence to our Superintendent's figurative facts; but it is time to treat the subject in sincerity, and as in the presence of the Searcher of Hearts.

One grand error of which our Superintendent has not taken the slightest notice, vitiates the greater part of his statistics. The Report for 1853 embraced only six months, or one set of Semi-Annual Returns, that for 1855 twelve months, or two sets of Returns. It is difficult to conceive the description and state of mind which would permit such an error to escape notice in the midst of calculations and comparisons which must have occupied several days. But it is not sufficient for my present purpose to point out such an error, or the existence of some mental defect; other errors of an equally serious nature, and certainly more injurious to the Parish School service become manifest on a careful examination of the Report.

I shall now point out special matters, and shall take as my text corresponding portions of the Report itself, which I shall quote, at present beginning at the top of page 53.

"The preceding tables, which have been drawn up with great pains, and with as much accuracy as the wants of the returns furnished to the Superintendent would permit, are valuable because they show, and with I trust continue every succeeding year to show, the gradual but certain improvement which is taking place in the educational affairs of this Province."

Statistics, to be valuable for the promotion of honest education, must be correct. Those which our Superintendent has produced are exceedingly incorrect, and even absurd, as I shall presently show; but admitting them for argument's sake to be as he would represent them, it is impossible that his trust as above expressed can have any solid foundation. Experience, moreover, has shown that statistics got up by individuals whose interests are connected with enlarged or diminished results, must be narrowly scanned, for in very many cases selfishness resolves every doubt. The circumstances must be very extraordinary in which any great and sudden increase or diminution can take place in the Educational statistics in any one year, and consequently those given in the Report before us are positively unimportant, except as they demonstrate the fact that we must be on our guard against excessive carelessness or deep design.

"In the Superintendent's Report for 1852, Table "A gives the following Statistics, (Column 1,) so which I have appended the corresponding ones for 1853, (Column 2,) and the increase in each, (Column 3.)

	1	2	3
	1852	1853	Increase.
"Number of Parishes reported by Inspectors as provided with one or more Schools, -	98	101	3
"Number of Districts so provided, -	318	330	12
"Number of Schools, -	608	744	136
"Number of Pupils attending them, -	19,391	24,137	4,746
"Time Schools have been kept in weeks, -	12,656	37,168	24,512
"Average time Schools have been so kept in weeks, -	19	33	14

There are some errors in these figures. In column 2, according to the tables, 744 ought to be 774. In column 3, 56 ought to be 36; and 15,556 ought to be 5,556.

The last error, after affecting the calculations on page 54, has been noticed by the Superintendent.

There is a perplexing ambiguity in the present and last year's Report, as to what is meant by a

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