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addressed "JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, St. John, N. B."**EDUCATIONAL GATHERINGS.**

County Institutes are to be held in Carleton, Westmorland, and Kent, about the middle of the present month. The time, it seems to us, is well chosen. The teachers have had time since the vacation to get their schools in good working order. With their energies renewed they have entered on their duties with a fresh zeal and earnestness, and the County Institutes, convened at this season, should have a life and vigor about them that will be inspiring to teachers and schools. There can be no doubt that much of the good that is expected from these Institutes is lost if they are held at a time when teachers need rest. The Institute that assembles on the eve of a summer vacation is very likely to be a lifeless one and productive of little benefit to teachers or communities. Excellent papers may be read and excellent suggestions given upon methods of teaching and management of schools, but the appeals are made to tired auditors and the valuable suggestions that may be given are in part forgotten during the vacation that ensues. But the conditions are changed if the Institute meets near the beginning of the term. The teachers have been benefited by their rest and are then more likely to give and receive aid. From the Institutes they go directly to their schools and put in effect the practical suggestions and helps which they have received.

We hope that the most important papers and those of general interest to teachers, read at the County Institutes this month, will find their way into the columns of the JOURNAL. By this means useful hints and practical suggestions on teaching will become the property of the many, and be the means of advancing the interest of Provincial education. That this end may be secured we ask the friends of this journal at the different Institutes to assist in extending its circulation and influence. The testimony of many experienced teachers is to the effect that the material it furnishes in every issue is in the highest degree helpful to them in their every day work. We desire to extend its usefulness and increase its effectiveness. Thus we can only do through the co-operation of our friends.

It was an excellent move that was made, at the recent Provincial Institute, to have its next session take place at the last of October 1887. The reasons for this change that we have urged in regard to County Institutes, apply equally well to the Provincial Institute, and it will not be too much to expect that better results will follow when teachers go from these Institutes with the greater part of the school year before them in which to put in practice what has been acquired at these meetings.

An effort is being made to bring about a convention of educationists of the United States and Canada in Montreal in July, 1887. A despatch to the *Kentucky Globe* says: "The principal object in view is to bring about the establishment of a comprehensive educational institution. The American associations, whose gatherings are to be taken advantage of for the accomplishment of this scheme, are the Teachers' Association of the State of New York; American Philological Convention; Vermont State Teachers' Association and American Institute of Inspectors." We shall endeavor to keep our readers posted in the progress made toward this educational gathering.

DISTRICT ASSESSMENT.

The present mode of district assessment has given dissatisfaction in some quarters and perhaps not without reason. The law provides, Sec. 23, that "Residents of the District shall be rated and assessed in such district in respect of their real and personal property and income ratable for Parish purposes."

It very often happens that much of the property in the school district is owned in some other district in the Parish, and it is not thus available for assessment in the district in which it lies.

Section 27 provides that "where a Parish contains an incorporated town, the limits of which are not co-extensive with those of the Parish, such Parish outside of the incorporated town and the incorporated town, shall be deemed to be separate Parishes for the purposes of district assessment."

This is well, but it seldom happens that an incorporated town is not situated in a parish wholly. For example, the limits of the towns of St. Stephen and Chatham, if we mistake not, and many others, are co-extensive with the parishes in which they are situated.

The wealthy men of the Parish are generally to be found in the business centre and of course pay their taxes there where they are least needed for school purposes, and the districts in which said property lies are often greatly straitened for want of means to support a school. The same is true of any populous centre whether incorporated or not.

The question arises then, would it not be advisable to amend the School Law, so that all property in a district should be taxed there? It might bear heavily on the cities and towns, but surely these do not need these taxes as much as the country districts.

Did space allow we might cite examples of many districts in which if all the taxable property were available for assessment no difficulty would be experienced in supporting a school for the entire year, but which are necessitated from this cause to keep it open only a portion of the time. They are thus compelled to see their own children deprived of privileges which their village neighbours, or more fortunate districts in the parish are enjoying at their expense. It is true that there would be some disadvantages in the change, but it would only affect the machinery of the law. The assessors would of necessity be obliged to value the property of taxpayers situate in each school district separately, but there is no doubt but that if this were done much property which is now either

entirely overlooked or greatly undervalued, would be taxed on an equitable basis. An opportunity is afforded to some of our legislators to move in this matter. The change cannot fail to meet with popular favour from any standpoint. Country districts will welcome it, and residents of town and villages would no doubt experience relief in the way of lighter school taxes, were their property which is situate in the country taxed there.

COURSES OF INSTRUCTION.

Much misapprehension exists concerning courses of instruction in the public schools, their scope and tendency.

Theoretically there is and should be but one course of instruction—namely, that prescribed by the educational authorities—but practically there are often three in vogue, namely, (1) that laid down and insisted upon by trustees and parents, which is supposed to meet the requirements of each pupil and parent. This course must be flexible to work. (2) That blocked out by the teacher, who trims between the parents' wishes—or, perhaps, convenience—and the authorized course. (3) That laid down by law.

As to the first, though it may seem strange, a few teachers' situations depend on the parents' caprice in this regard. The pupils' standing is gauged by his advancement usually in reading. Everything must be made to correspond with it, and woe be to the new teacher who is presumptuous enough to re-classify him in this respect. He may be absent from school two-thirds of the time and become rusty in any subject save, in the eye of the parent, his reading book. Instances have been known of pupils who by hook or by crook, in the succession of term, have reached the fifth book and who have cheerfully acknowledged their manifold deficiencies in addition and striven to amend them, but the fifth book they could never fall from that pedestal.

What signifies a uniform system of classification in the school? That boy's reputation as a scholar in the district would be ruined should he retrograde in the number of his reading book.

A few teachers are a law to themselves in regard to a course of instruction. Under the plea of teaching the useful rather than the ornamental, they cover up a deal of laziness and pull the wool over the eyes of many well-disposed Boards of Trustees.

It would be a crude system of education in the public schools that had not an authorized course of instruction and which the government did not see was carried out as far as possible. A large part of the support for schools is derived from the government coffers and in return a course of instruction is prescribed among other things in the interests of educational advancement.

To pursue the first course would result in chaos and to guard against the second and see that the third is carried out is a part of the object of school inspection.

The entire population of Germany, as enumerated in the quinquennial census of December last, is given at 46,840,597, an increase of 1,606,528 over that of 1880.