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The Canada School Journal

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CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS RECEIVED

An Honorable Mention at Paris Exhibition, 1878.

Recommended by the Minister of Education for Ontario.

Recommended by the Council of Public Instruction, Quebec.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, New Brunswick.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Nova Scotia.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, British Columbia.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Manitoba.

The Publishers frequently receive letters from their friends complaining of the non-receipt of the JOURNAL. In explanation they would state, as subscriptions are necessarily payable in advance, the mailing clerks have instructions to discontinue the paper when a subscription expires. The clerks are, of course, unable to make any distinction in a list containing names from all parts of the United States and Canada.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ONTARIO SCHOOL ACT.

In the Official Department of the present number of the JOURNAL will be found the amendments to the Public Schools Act, made during the present session of the Ontario Legislature. Section one gives rural trustees the power to open the schools on the third instead of the eighteenth of August. The legal holidays are not changed, six weeks are still to be regarded as the regular vacation, and no government or municipal allowance will be given for this time. It is to be regretted that miserable jealousy of the teacher should lead to an agitation in favor of shortening the summer vacation. Such an agitation has begun, however, and promised to assume large proportions. Probably no better way could have been taken to meet and stop this agitation than that adopted by Mr. Crooks. He promptly met and objected to the passage of the amendment of Mr. Watters to reduce the midsummer holidays to three weeks, and introduced his own amendment, which is to be of a temporary nature, unless largely adopted by rural trustees throughout the province. We hold that it is decidedly wrong to reduce the vacation in summer. It is unwise in the interests of pupils, parents and teachers. If, however, trustees largely avail themselves of the provisions of the amendment, we hope they will be compelled to pay the teacher for the extra time taught, and to send their children regularly, under penalty of a fine for every day's absence not caused by sickness. Unless this is done, Teachers' Associations will have to become Unions, whose members will be bound not to teach a school where short holidays are insisted on by the trustees. The teachers have this question in their own hands, and we hope they will settle it properly.

Section two regulates an amendment of last session, which provided that non-residents, even if property owners, should be liable to pay fees. The present amendment allows non-residents to send their children to a school provided they have

property in the section on which they pay a sum at least equal to the average rate paid by the residents of such section. Trustees are to be allowed to charge as much as fifty cents per month for the children of other non-residents.

Section three makes needed amendments, which will tend to the easier and more equitable working of Union School sections.

Section four greatly simplifies the work of taking the school census and collecting the school rates. The township assessor is to set down in his roll the number of children between five and sixteen, and the township clerk has to make a return of the number of children of school age to the trustees of each section on or before the first day of July of each year. The expenses of assessing, collecting and paying school rates is to be borne by the municipality. Trustees will undoubtedly hail this clause with delight.

Section six makes it clear that the twenty-ninth section of last session does not apply to furniture, appliances, ordinary repairs, &c. Some rabid opponents of the public schools held that the trustees could not put in a pane of glass without calling a meeting of the ratepayers of the section.

Section eight is perhaps the most important amendment of the present bill. A great deal of litigation and other trouble has arisen from the quashing by the courts of local by-laws for the formation, alteration, or dissolution of school sections, unions, township boards, &c. This section provides that such by-laws shall be absolutely legal and valid "when they have been submitted to and confirmed by the Minister of Education." This may seem a large power to place in the hands of the Minister of Education, but it is an evidence of the need of the change, as well as a merited compliment to Mr. Crooks, that the Hon. Mr. Cameron, when leader of the Opposition in 1877, and subsequently Mr. Meredith, urged the advisability of giving even more power to the Minister of Education in settling local disputes, as well as in rendering local action valid.

Section twelve enables the Minister of Education to compel the attendance of witnesses at any inquiry "which he may institute, make or direct," without appealing to any court.

On the whole, the provisions of the amendments are desirable, and Mr. Crooks is to be congratulated on the firmness he showed in resisting encroachments on the essential principles of the law, as well as on the care shown in the preparation of the needed changes.

HIGH SCHOOL RIVALRY.

The remarkable impetus given to our High Schools by the improved regulations framed under the provisions of the legislation of 1871 marks an important period in our educational history. With a programme of studies adapted to the requirements of a new but progressive community, and the adoption of