

are in a weak, inefficient and non-progressive condition. The children of the country schools will be at a great disadvantage under the conditions of our modern life, if they go forth from them poorly equipped to enter into competition with those better prepared for the race. The issues that are affecting rural schools elsewhere should receive careful attention here. Among these are the consolidation of country schools with the establishment of rural high schools in the more populous districts, and free transportation of pupils; instruction in the elements of agriculture, with school gardens for this purpose and the better prosecution of nature-study; provisions for manual training; making the school-house, within and without, a wholesome and, as far as possible, a beautiful place, by beautifying the school-grounds and adorning the interior with clean, attractive walls, books, pictures, etc.

It must be confessed that the reports of the Superintendents for the past year show that we have not made much progress in these lines of advance. Consolidation of country schools is a thing only talked about except in one or two places. It is true that the normal schools have been devoting considerable attention to the teaching of agriculture and nature-study, but it is doubtful if much impression has been made upon country schools. Considerable improvement has been made in certain sections in the decoration of school grounds and school buildings, by the observance of Arbor Day and school festivals; but these improvements are rather due to the energy and ambition of a few teachers and school officers than to a general co-operation of the public. Manual training has received a decided impetus from the schools established throughout the three provinces by the generosity of Sir W. C. MacDonald, aided by the fine executive abilities of Prof. Robertson, and the corps of enthusiastic and skilled teachers who are laying a good foundation for the future of manual training here. A law encouraging the adoption of manual training has gone into effect in Nova Scotia, and last year five manual training schools, with an aggregate of 1,238 pupils, went into operation in that province with a prospect of a large increase this year. Supt. MacKay is to be congratulated on such an excellent beginning. Supt. Inch, of New Brunswick, urges the legislature, now in session, to assist in providing suitable accommodation for districts, and to grant amounts to properly qualified teachers for the promotion of manual training in the schools. Dr. Inch says: "It is because I am convinced that the spending of two or three hours a week of the child's school life in training his hand and eye, and his intellectual and moral

character through the exercise of the hand and eye, will quicken rather than weaken his interest in his reading, writing, arithmetic and other fundamental studies, that I recommend with confidence the adoption of the system." We hope that the legislature may carry out the recommendation of Dr. Inch, and that school boards will hasten to give proper encouragement to manual training.

There is one feature in all the Superintendents' reports that must be viewed with grave anxiety and concern, and that is the low salaries paid to teachers. Instead of there being an improvement during the last decade, there has been a slight but steady decrease in salaries paid to teachers of country schools. The effect of this must be a steady decrease in the character of the teaching done in rural sections. Good teachers are seeking other employments where there is decent remuneration. Many who are still in the service are looking for an early opportunity to get out of it; while a great majority of the others are restless and flit about from one district to another seeking to better their condition. In the meantime the average country school board shows no disposition to be more liberal or appreciate more highly the services of experienced teachers. The result may be easily imagined. Cheap teachers are employed. Frequent changes take place; and a lasting injury is being done to the youth of the country.

Superintendent Anderson, of Prince Edward Island, makes out a strong case in his report against the low salaries of teachers, and the consequences that must result from such parsimony. And he has not been contented to use his pen only, but he has taken the platform and used his voice and influence freely in addressing audiences throughout the Island, striving to impress upon the people the vital importance of this matter and their duty. We hope his words may have weight.

The REVIEW has before pointed out that the teachers should do something more than *complain* of low salaries. It has been the burden of endless papers and discussions for years past, and still salaries are decreasing! Some action is required. Teachers should come nearer together, the well paid teachers and those poorly paid—not to complain of low salaries, for that is patent to everybody—but to unite and make a special study of conditions adverse to the rural teacher and how these may be remedied. It should be insisted that a proper salary is only a proper recognition of services well performed, and that the best teaching should not be expected unless teachers are maintained in the condition for doing the best work.

If a united body of teachers—collegiate, high school, intermediate and primary teachers—would apply themselves with the spirit of candor and fair play to this question of low salaries, some of the causes would be found among the teachers themselves. Let teachers apply themselves to putting their own house in order, and then if pleas to the people will not bring improvement in salaries, they should apply for legislative enactment to prescribe respectable minimum salaries,