

District, to assess the remaining one-third or any lesser number of the inhabitants, if necessary, for their quota towards the Teacher's salary, so that the sum to be raised may be fairly contributed by each and all. But as this general plan may not be found applicable to some of the poorer country Districts in the Island, a clause has been inserted in the Bill providing that when the inhabitants of a District are unable to raise the required sum, in aid of the Teacher's salary, and that fact be certified to the Government by the Board of Education, and the services of the licensed Teacher can be procured for the Government allowance, or that sum and an amount in addition less than the proper proportion, in such case the Government allowance shall be granted and the benefit of the Act extended to that District. Another feature of the proposed Bill was the abolition of the distinction hitherto made in favor of the Acadian Schools, it being proposed to put them upon precisely the same footing as the other Schools in the Island receiving Government aid; and, it was presumed, that this arrangement would meet with general concurrence in the House, there being no good or constitutional reason why one class or section of the inhabitants should stand upon a different basis, as regards Legislation, from the main body of the inhabitants, or why the same privileges should not be extended to all classes and nationalities alike. The hon. gentleman then referred to the operation of the Act, and to the vast outlay of money which had been made from year to year under it, and stated that although the benefit resulting from it had been very great, it had not been quite commensurate with the expenditure, and he traced it to two main causes, although apparently slight in themselves. In the first place, the original Act was deficient in one important feature, in reference to the mode of keeping up the number of scholars in the Schools. It provided, correctly enough, that a School should not be established, unless the requisite number of 40 scholars were found in the District between certain ages, but the moment they were found, and the School was once established, that desideratum was lost sight of; and provided a certain average attendance in the Schools was maintained, all was right. Now this was certainly a defect in the system, for the numbers in a District might increase or decrease to a very great extent, and if such were the case, the average attendance would necessarily be influenced by that circumstance. The Law, therefore, should have regulated the average attendance in proportion to the number of scholars in the District; and this circumstance will, to some extent, account for the second defect in our legislation, namely, the alterations that have been made in the Act by repeatedly lowering the standard or average attendance at the schools, thus inflicting an injury upon the great bulk of the schools to meet the case, perhaps, of a few isolated ones in which the actual number of children in the District had, no doubt, diminished far below the original number required by the Statute. To meet this evil it was proposed by the new Bill that the average attendance at the schools should be regulated by the number of children in the District, thus, when there were 40 and under 50 children in a District, there should be an average attendance of 20, when there were 50, and under 60, there should be an average of 25

children in attendance, and so on in that proportion; and, in order to insure this regulation, it was required that in all agreements hereafter to be entered into between Trustees and Teachers, the number of children in the District should be clearly specified; and as copies of these agreements were to be sent in to the Board of Education, the means would be at once afforded of ascertaining the condition of any given School, and whether it was in a healthy or languishing condition. Additional powers and facilities were also proposed by the Act to be given to the Board of Education to enlarge or re-arrange the boundaries of Districts, with the assent of the inhabitants, and also with such assent to convert two ordinary Districts into a Grammar School District, providing that the salaries that would be payable to the two ordinary Teachers should be united to form the salary of a Grammar School Master. And a like power was also proposed to be given to the Board to change any common District into a Grammar School District, in cases where the inhabitants were willing to increase the rate of contribution towards the Master's salary in a fair proportion. This power, it was hoped, would prove of advantage to the inhabitants, especially in some of the older and more flourishing sections of the Island, as enabling them to give a higher and better education to their sons than the ordinary District Schools could be expected to impart, and would thus prepare them to enter College with advantage to themselves. Independent of this machinery, the Bill also contemplated the establishment of three Grammar Schools, one in each capital of the respective counties, viz: one in Charlottetown, one in Georgetown, and one in Summerside, to be placed under the control of the Government, with an annual salary of one hundred pounds provided for each master. It was also proposed to make an alteration in the mode of supervision. It was useless to expect that any one man could efficiently perform this duty; another School Visitor was accordingly to be appointed, and the Island being divided into two sections, with one Visitor to each, it was not too much to expect a regular quarterly report from each, and that a more strict and rigid inspection would be secured. It was hoped that the efforts of the one, in fulfilling his duties, would operate beneficially upon the other, and thus establishing an honorable rivalry between them, the interest of Education would be promoted.

These were the general features of the proposed Bill, the details of which the hon. gentleman stated would be more fully explained in Committee, and he concluded by moving its second reading.

Hon Mr COLES opposed the Bill as the first blow against the system of Free Education. He believed that the people were not willing to give it up, because they were fully aware but for that system the youth of the Island would have been nowhere. The principle was correct; but under the proposed Bill, if the parents did not pay, the children would lose their education.

Hon Mr LONGWORTH was of opinion that if parents were required to contribute something towards the education of their children, it would be an advantage to themselves—it would not only induce them to send their children more regularly to school, but to take a deeper interest in their progress while