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The Canada School Journal

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CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS RECEIVED

*An Honorable Mention at Paris Exhibition, 1876.
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.

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

The report for 1883 appears just as this issue is made up. We are therefore unable at present to do more than give a brief summary of its contents.

The first point we notice is a decrease of 407 in the total public school population, leaving 483,817 of school age. Of these, 457,178 have attended school during some portion of the year. The average attendance was 45 per cent. of those on the roll, which is, compared with other countries, a very respectable result. We believe that the average attendance does not reach fifty per cent. in any country, but have not the exact figures at hand. For the work of teaching these 483,817 children we have 5,203 schools and 6,857 teachers. The total expenditure on the public schools was \$3,026,974 for the year, an increase of \$182,702 over the previous year. But from this we must deduct \$341,918, fixed capital, spent on sites and buildings, leaving \$2,685,056 as the working expenses for the year. The average cost per pupil for the year was \$6.42, probably many times less than the cost of prosecuting each criminal convicted during the same period.

The Legislative grant to the public schools was \$251,356, and \$14,382 to the separate schools, showing a total increase of \$7,441.

As the teacher really makes the school, and salaries roughly measure the efficiency of teachers on the whole, it is interesting to note the average salaries of teachers in the province. For cities it stands at \$742 for men and \$331 for women; in towns \$576 and \$273; \$385 and \$248, respectively, in rural districts. The highest salary paid in 1882 to city teachers was \$1,100 and the lowest to men \$400; in towns \$1,000 and \$240; in counties \$900 and \$120. We find that the number of women employed as teachers is 3,795, an increase of 235, while there is a decrease of 300 men, leaving 3,062, or a minority of the whole to the extent of 733. Perhaps this is not an unmixed evil, for many of our best teachers are ladies,

but to us it indicates a tendency to pay the lowest salaries and is not a good omen for the stability of the profession at large, for we can scarcely suppose that half these 3,795 ladies will remain without engagements of a closer character and that within ten years they will not hold certificates entitling them to preside elsewhere than in the school-room. If the province could be persuaded to spend \$50,000 on teachers' residences, perhaps we should be able to retain many of these skilful ladies in the service. At any rate many of the annual changes would be obviated and many of the 3,062 men who will soon leave the work, would marry and settle down to teaching for a far longer period. The lack of a comfortable house attached to the school is at the bottom of very many of the pernicious changes which give the teachers so much the character of itinerants. With a convenient dwelling many a man would be content to become a permanent resident

the place, who is now tempted to seek in some other employment the means of establishing a settled home. It is a great annual loss to the educational interests of the country to have experienced men continually leaving the ranks, and \$50,000 could not be more profitably spent. Even if one half the money were supplied directly by the government, we should save more than that amount by retaining skilled teaching power in the public service.

In the matter of school buildings steady progress is apparent. We spent \$341,918 for this purpose, being an increase of \$61,458 for the year. Handsome and well-equipped school houses are rising rapidly all over the country and we earnestly hope that during the next decade teachers' homes equally commodious and beautiful will nestle beside them. Teaching in the meantime will not become the life-work of the majority of men who are now teachers.

Looking at the percentage in the several classes, we find more than half of those at school in the first and the second class,—58 per cent.,—and one quarter in the third class. The figures are first class 35, second class 23, third class 25, fourth class 15, fifth class 2, and sixth class 22-hundredths per cent. of the whole number of pupils attending school. In all measures of educational reform it will be important to bear these proportions in mind. We must continually remember that the junior classes are more than one half of the whole number at school. In the preparation of programmes, the training of teachers, the work undertaken at conventions, etc., this fact should be firmly grasped, and thoroughly realized. If it be true, as constantly alleged by high educational authorities, that the best teaching talent should be employed upon these junior classes—and we endorse the statement—we can see the magnitude of the work that still lies before our Model and Normal Schools, and understand how much they need every encouragement and every stimulus, both moral and financial. At present we have only 1873 teachers who have been trained at the Normal Schools.