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FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN ONTARIO.

THE Province of Ontario was the first one of those now composing the Dominion of Canada, which adopted a system of Free Public Schools, based upon taxation, and ever since its inception, we believe, that system has been under the able and eminent superintendence of Dr. Ryerson. Since that Province has had much more experience in this matter than any other in the Dominion, any changes made in the Common School Law or Regulations of Ontario, are deserving of careful attention by us in Nova Scotia, in order to see if we may profit by the example they embody.

Very considerable changes have recently been made in the School Law of Ontario. To only one of these, we now purpose to make a brief reference; it is one relating to the examination and grading of teachers. There, as in this Province, Common School Teachers are of three grades. We understand that, under the new arrangement, a much higher standard of acquirements is stipulated for than has heretofore been considered sufficient; so much so that third class certificates under the new regulations are held to be quite equal to second class under the old. The examinations are to be held simultaneously throughout the whole Province; and the same programme of questions is to be everywhere employed. Nothing, of course, can be more fair and impartial than this; whilst the fact of the examinations being all made on the same day effectually guards against any collusion between candidates. The examinations for second and third class certificates are to be held before the County Boards; those for first class certificates, before the Provincial Board of Public Instruction only. The Provincial Board can thus be pretty thoroughly assured as to the capability of those to whom are to be entrusted the responsibilities of first class teachers, at the same time it can form a good idea as to the earnestness and care with which the several County Boards have conducted previous examinations.

We mention these changes for the consideration of the friends of Education generally in this Province, without pretending, at this early stage, to say that they are, or are not, suitable to the better working of our own system. But there is another provision in the new Ontario law, relative to Teachers, which may be deserving of more serious consideration in Nova Scotia. It is this. No one can be a candidate for a second class certificate on first turning his attention to teaching. He must hold a third class certificate and furnish evidence of three years successful teaching before he can compete for one of the second class. So, no one can compete for a first class certificate who does not already hold a second. If we are to assume that men are not born teachers, but have to learn, both by practice and theory, how to properly discharge the duties of their profession, as has to be done in all other professions, the advantages of this arrangement must be obvious. Every one who has given any thought to the matter, must be aware that a young man, or young woman, may go through the Normal School with credit, may pass a good examination and secure a high class certificate, and yet never become a successful teacher. This requirement of the new Ontario regulations, provides against such eventualities as far as legal enactments can. It also has a tendency to make the business of teaching a life-long profession, instead of a mere temporary occupation; and we cannot but think that whatever tends to that result, tends, also to materially advance the best interests of Education.

A writer in one of the daily Halifax papers calls attention to what seems an irregularity in the employment and pay of Teachers in some of our Public Schools. From the remarks of this writer, we are led to infer that Trustees, taking advantage of the Govern-

ment Grant to Teachers of a higher grade, urge, that as the Teacher receives his education without charge, which, however, is not always the case, and having a higher grade of license, and consequently a larger Government Grant, can take a less sum from the Trustees. It is to be assumed that the holder of a higher License is the more valuable teacher, and the Government therefore pays according to the grade of License, and expects that the salary from the Trustees will in like manner, and for like reasons, increase also.

The County Grants are distributed according to the average number of pupils, and the time the School was in operation; the sum required in addition is provided for in the Sectional tax, in which the Poll tax comes first.

There certainly is nothing in the Law to interfere with "the privilege of hiring as low as ever they can;" but is there not an efficient check to the abuse of this privilege in the self-respect and conscious worth, which, it is presumed every teacher possesses? We can scarcely imagine a first or second class teacher giving his or her time and ability for the sum of the Government and County grants. The teacher who will do this assuredly ought not complain, nor should teachers blame trustees if they themselves, by consenting to such agreements, induce this extravagant parsimony.

It must be remembered, that there are two parties in every contract, and in this case, if teachers insist upon a liberal salary, Trustees will have no alternative. The spirit and aim of the Law is, that Teachers holding a higher License shall claim from Trustees, as from the Government, a higher remuneration for the service performed. Where the Government gives more the Trustees should also give more: for the simple reason, that the service of a more valuable teacher is thereby secured for the section. A teacher holding a high grade of License should never so underrate himself as to teach for the smallest sum for which he can possibly live. If he has the vigor of character to be expected, rather than do this he will seek from the multitudes of surrounding openings one more generous as to financial results. Teachers themselves have much to do in correcting the evil of which the above named writer complains; but, we hope it is not true that the choice between first and third class Teachers is in the fact that the former receives from the Government a larger sum, and will therefore take less from Trustees. A few solitary cases may exist. We think they are very few, and are alike discreditable to Trustees and Teacher. With the exercise of a little firmness and prudence in this matter, there are few country Teachers that will not be "as well lodged, as well fed, and quite as highly respected as any other professional class in Nova Scotia."

THE following from the closing Address of the Superintendent to the Teachers Association, at its recent Session at Annapolis, is printed by request:—

"We have gathered on this occasion, in the ancient capital of Acadia, a fact which to many present, will, I doubt not lend an additional interest to our meeting. This place is replete with historic associations, and, indeed, it is in that respect, second to none in North America.

We are assembled upon the site of what was the first settlement destined to be permanent, made by Europeans upon any part of the continent of America, north of Florida. Since that many an exciting, many triumphant, and too many a sad scene, has been enacted, in and around this spot. Within ear of where we now are, many a time, many a hundreds of times, has the pierce Micmac's war-whoop startled the white man from his slumbers,—on every side of us cannon have rolled and thundered