

Last year's increase in the number of pupils was less than that of the two preceding years, and not much more than that of 1860. The annual increase has, besides, always been subject to fluctuations for which no cause can be assigned, unless it be, perhaps, the diseases to which children of an age to attend school are liable, such as scarlatina and small-pox. The firm position taken by the Department with regard to the diplomas also prevented the opening of several new schools, and even caused a few to be closed; yet it is obvious that it was necessary to continue with vigor the reform which had been already commenced, although in so doing, the chance of obtaining less satisfactory numerical results might be incurred.

Some districts of inspection show a decrease in the number of children attending school. They are those assigned to Mr. Crépault, Inspector for the counties of Bellechasse, Montmagny and L'Islet; to Mr. Maurault, Inspector for the counties of Yamaska and Nicolet; and to Mr. Bôland, Inspector for the counties of Beauce and Lotbinière. In the last district the decrease is not less than 699. The adjoining district, including the counties of Lévis and Dorchester, under Mr. Juneau's inspection, does not show any increase. The greatest numerical increase is that of the district assigned to Mr. Valade, which comprises the Catholic schools of the city of Montreal and those of the counties of Jacques Cartier, Hochelaga, Vaudreuil and Soulanges. The numbers are 17,431 for last year, and 18,498 for the present year. The greatest part of this increase took place in the schools under control, the figures which represent the independent schools showing an increase of 111 only.

The greatest proportional increase took place in the district formed by the county of Chicoutimi, under Mr. Martin's inspection, in which the number has risen from 1024 to 1573,—or a fraction over fifty per cent. Next comes the district under Mr. Boivin's inspection, comprising the counties of Charlevoix and Saguenay, in which the numbers increased from 2043 to 2495, or nearly twenty-four per cent.

If, to the number of children frequenting the primary schools (who are almost without exception under 16 years of age), we add the number of pupils under sixteen belonging to the other schools,

a total of 184,661 will be obtained. The number of children from five to fifteen being 289,429 according to the census of 1861, we have, by adding 15,000 for those who have completed their fifteenth year and for natural increase between 1861 and 1863, a total of 304,429. The proportion of children between 5 and 16 years of age frequenting the schools is therefore 60.60 per cent. As the percentage in 1855 was only 47.33, we have an increase of 13.37 per cent representing the progress made since that time. (1)

But it should be observed that the ages between five and sixteen indicate the *optional* limits imposed upon the school population by the law; it is only from seven to fourteen that the monthly rate can be levied; and this may, therefore, be considered as indicating the limits of the school population subject to *compulsion*. The number of children within the last mentioned limits attending school shows a proportion of at least 75 per cent.

The proportion of the total number of pupils, viz., 193,131, to the whole population, as shown by the last census and by adding 44 000 for subsequent increase, i. e. on 1,156,000, is 16.07 per cent.

The primary schools and the pupils in attendance, as reported by their managers, are classified as follows: 2762 schools in operation under control of commissioners, with 131,641 pupils; 50 schools under control of Catholic dissentient trustees, with 1,874 pupils; 123 schools under control of Protestant dissentient trustees, with 4,263 pupils; and 350 independent schools with 23,812 pupils.

These primary schools may be further classified thus: 4 model schools connected with the Normal schools and attended by 759 pupils; 291 superior primary schools also called *model schools*, attended by 19,276 pupils; and 3,030 elementary schools attended by 142,314 pupils.

The following table of increase in the assessments during the last seven years exhibits well sustained progress. The increase during the year 1863 was, as may be seen, as considerable as during the preceding year; it took place exclusively in the monthly rates. I have already explained that this statement exhibits only the sums imposed, and that there are always arrears remaining unpaid, for which however, some compensation is to be found in

TABLE of assessments levied annually since 1856.

	1856.	1857.	1858.	1859.	1860.	1861.	1862.	1863.
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Assessments to equal the grant.....	113,884 87	113,897 08	115,185 09	115,792 51	114,424 76	113,969 29	110,966 75	110,534 25
Assessments in excess of the grant...	93,897 90	78,791 17	88,372 69	109,151 96	123,939 64	130,560 92	134,033 15	134,888 50
Monthly rates.....	173,488 98	208,602 37	231,192 65	251,408 44	249,717 10	264,689 11	281,930 23	307,635 14
Assessments for building purposes....	25,493 80	22,928 63	24,646 22	22,083 57	15,778 23	17,000 00	15,798 84	11,749 76
Total.....	406,765 55	424,203 25	459,396 65	498,436 48	503,859 73	526,219 32	542,728 97	564,810 65

the collection of arrears remaining over from the year preceding.

It is to be observed that the instruction given in several branches is advanced to a degree that leaves little to be desired, except natural increase in the number of schools and their attendance. Thus, 63,913 children are learning French grammar—a number almost as great as of those who read “off hand;” 60,585 study geography; 59,024, history; 75,719, simple arithmetic, and 45,727, compound arithmetic.

While the number of pupils learning French grammar increased by 2,599 in 1863, the number learning English grammar diminished by 1,104. As it is certain that the study of the English language is increasing in the French schools, these facts come in support of the observation often recorded by different school inspectors in their reports, which is that the study of grammar was neglected in many English schools.

Among the documents which accompany this Report will be found the usual reports of the Principals of the Normal Schools for the

year just ended. The information conveyed in these documents shows that favorable results have attended the important work of normal instruction; and it will be noticed with pleasure that the Principals take a great deal of interest in the success of the pupils whom they have trained to teaching. They visit their schools and maintain constant communication with them; and they also take an active part in the conventions held three times in the year at the Jacques-Cartier and Laval Normal Schools, and annually at the McGill Normal School; which conventions are attended by former pupils and by all teachers holding diplomas who wish to attend.

(1) The census taken under the authority of the 71st Sec, Chapt. 15, of the Consolidated Statutes gives a much smaller number; but as this census has not been taken at all in certain municipalities, and as I have reason to look upon it as exceedingly inexact in other respects, I have taken the figures from the decennial census.