

# Journal of Education.

HALIFAX, APRIL, 1883.

WE have great pleasure in publishing extracts from Mr. Blair's recent speech in the House of Assembly on TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The object aimed at is so eminently laudable and patriotic that we are glad to further it by making the JOURNAL OF EDUCATION a medium of carrying Col. Blair's progressive and intelligently expressed views into every School Section and every School House in Nova Scotia. As a plea for the establishment of institutions in which special preparation for the more important industrial pursuits of the Province may be obtained, we give the speech our cordial endorsement.

We may be permitted to remark in relation to one or two personal references, that the honorable member has seriously misapprehended the attitude of the individual holding the office of Superintendent of Education towards the subject in which he is so deeply interested. So far from that person being "opposed," at the time to which reference is made, "to any deviation from the present course of Education in our Common and Normal Schools," he was then engaged in an earnest effort, since carried to a successful issue, to secure a course of study embodying, as far as practicable, those industrial features of primary education, without which as a *foundation*, experience has shown advanced technical schools to be of little value. The incidental quotation at the dinner of the University Consolidation Society of the remark of a distinguished educationist to the effect that the Common Schools of a country cannot safely be converted into mere work-shops, seems to have induced inferences which, if legitimate through the ambiguity of extemporaneous speaking were certainly not intended. That proposition itself we hold to be a sound and perfectly defensible one, but the truth which it conveys is by no means antagonistic to the interests of true industrial education. We are sure that Mr. Blair himself would be the last man in Nova Scotia to seriously propose to establish technical education on the ruins of the ordinary Common School instruction of the Province. Such an experiment would result in losing the greater, without gaining the less. *Intelligent* agriculturists, whose knowledge is entirely confined to agriculture, and *intelligent* artisans knowing nothing beyond their special industries, are contradictions in terms; they are impossibilities. Mr. Mundella, M.P., Secretary of the Educational Committee of the Privy Council, and representative of that body in the House of Commons, and who is himself one of the largest employers of labor in the world, has testified that special technical training is largely wasted on youths who have not first received a good Common School education, and that as a qualification for such training, *mere rudimentary ability* to read and write counts for but little. But we quite understand that rhetorical exaggerations are allowable when a speaker has a great cause to plead and strong statements are needed to attract attention.

To sum up. We fully agree with Mr. Blair that there has been something in our past methods of education—something quite as observable in our Colleges as in our Common Schools—which has been calculated to encourage "a vulgar prejudice against work as being itself vulgar." We regret

that the chief adverse criticism which our new Course of Study for Public Schools has received has been on account of the very features which have been designed to rectify the evil complained of. At the same time, candor forces us to say that we do not think that it can be made a matter of legitimate reproach against *our* Common Schools that we have to send abroad for skilled managers of our Sugar Refineries and Cotton factories, unless it can be shown that the persons imported in such capacities have received *their* special training in the Common Schools of the countries from which they come.

But as we understand Mr. Blair, his main contention is that we should supplement the incidental and preparatory industrial training possible to a common school by the work of regularly equipped technical institutions. His plea for such additional educational facilities is very strong, in fact it is irresistible.

The proposal to establish a Chair of Agriculture in the Provincial Normal School is one which, no doubt, will be carefully examined by the Government and Legislature when the time for action shall have arrived. To doubt its expediency in the interests both of economy and agriculture, should not be counted treason to the great cause of industrial education. But there is no warrant for assuming that the Superintendent of Education has definitely pronounced against it. It has never been submitted for his consideration.

Teachers and others interested in Education will not fail to notice that the ensuing session of the Provincial Educational Association is to be held in Halifax. The change from Truro to Halifax is understood to apply to this summer's session only, and has been made in accordance with a practically unanimous vote of the Executive Committee. While members of the Association may miss some of the admirable appliances and adjuncts of the Provincial Normal School, we are warranted in promising them an interesting and profitable programme of exercises, as well as a hearty welcome from the teaching profession in Halifax.

THE space at our disposal does not permit us to reprint from the last issue of the JOURNAL OF EDUCATION the list of text-books prescribed by the Council of Public Instruction for use in the Public Schools. The list will re-appear in the ensuing October number. The announced texts in Universal History, Practical Mathematics and English Grammar are nearly through press, and at latest will be ready for use in the schools at the beginning of the next school year. The text on Practical Mathematics will supply all the knowledge of trigonometry, mensuration, navigation and natural philosophy (mechanics) required of candidates for first-class licenses. Thus one compendious and inexpensive treatise will replace four or five texts heretofore on the list, some of them costly, as well as too cumbersome for effective use in the school-room. The revised edition of Swinton's Outlines of the World's History, which will probably be ready by mid-summer, contains a much-needed chapter on the history of the United States. It will be published at the retail price of one dollar.

WE publish for the information of Trustees and rate-payers the statute enacted at the recent session of the Legislature, entitled: "An Act to secure better attendance at Public Schools." That chairmen of annual meetings may be in a position to discharge the duty assigned them by the first section of the Act, the copies of this issue of the JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, transmitted to the various sections, should be carefully preserved by the trustees, and by them placed in the hands of chairmen of annual meetings.