

tion of the principles of christian morality, and what is of greater moment to every educator, the continuous practice of these principles in all the relations of the school-room; while at the same time it designs carefully to exclude from the school-room anything like sectarian teaching. It will be seen that these provisions are intended for the protection of all—whether they form a portion of the minority or of the majority—in order that all may be enabled heartily to combine their means for the support of an efficient school. If, however, any teacher should do violence to the intentions of the law, and abuse the high trust reposed in him, by introducing sectarian instruction, the general provisions of the law furnish an ample and speedy redress. The teacher, in his professional capacity, is directly amenable to the trustees of the section. "The trustees represent the inhabitants of the section, and transact all school business in their stead and on their behalf"—(Reg. of Coun. Pub. Inst., p. 50). On the complaint of the parent or guardian of any child in attendance on the school, being duly made to the trustees, they, by the very nature of their office, are bound to institute an immediate enquiry into the whole case, and to see that the rights of every scholar are carefully respected by the teacher. Should a case ever occur in which the parent or guardian had reason to believe that the trustees gave a decision which tended to deny to his child the protection contemplated by the law, he can at once appeal from such decision to the Council of Public Instruction. The Council is empowered "To determine all cases of appeal from the decision of Commissioners, Examiners, and Trustees, and make such orders thereon as may be required"—[Sec. 6 (9)].

Devotional exercises in connexion with the opening and closing of the schools is the only remaining point calculated to raise any question between religious minorities and majorities. We can recall but two or three sections in the Province, however, in which, during the past three years, any serious difficulty has arisen in this matter. The following order of the Council of Public Instruction was issued a year and a half ago to all trustees of schools. An examination of its provisions will shew that it has been a care to those upon whom has devolved the administration of the law, that the rights of all, even the smallest minorities, should be scrupulously respected:—

"Whereas it has been represented to the Council of Public Instruction that Trustees of Public Schools have, in certain cases, required pupils, on pain of forfeiting school privileges, to be present during devotional exercises not approved of by their parents; and whereas such proceeding is contrary to the principles of the School Law, the following additional Regulation is made for the direction of Trustees, the better to insure the carrying out of the spirit of the Law in this behalf:—

IT IS ORDERED, That in cases where the parents or guardians of children in actual attendance on any public school (or department) signify in writing to the Trustees their conscientious objection to any portion of such devotional exercises as may be conducted therein under the sanction of the Trustees, such devotional exercises shall either be so modified as not to offend the religious feelings of those so objecting, or shall be held immediately before the time fixed for the opening or after the time fixed for the close of the daily work of the school; and no children, whose parents or guardians signify conscientious objections thereto, shall be required to be present during such devotional exercises."

The following extract from the Regulations of the Council of Public Instruction, sets forth clearly the scope and design of our common school education, and the means by which that design is to be accomplished:—

"Its design is to foster and direct the unfolding of the youthful mind, and to fit it for a rational manhood and an enlightened citizenship.

In its physical aspect, it should have such a care for the body as the inflexible laws of our being render imperative, in order that the best conditions for the exercise of the intellectual powers may be had, and had continuously, and to purpose.

In its intellectual aspect, it should seek to make a well-informed and intelligent people. To secure the former, it must furnish the pupil with knowledge; and this it strives to accomplish by means of instruction. To create the latter it must exercise the powers of the pupil's mind on the knowledge presented: and this is education.

In its moral aspect, it should aim to make all physical and intellectual activity the product of just motives, to direct mental power into proper channels, and to mass the sum of the child's energies into one fit and substantial whole—character.

These processes, moreover to be carried to their best issue, should be kept in play simultaneously."—Reg. Coun. Pub. Inst. p. 32.

We have deemed it proper thus to present a succinct statement

of the foregoing provisions which are now operative in this Province, and which were doubtless the fruits of experience and careful observation.

It is abundantly evident that the provisions of our present system of education were carefully fashioned. We believe they are worthy of thoughtful study, and that any contemplated changes should be well weighed before being adopted.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

(From the Report of the Superintendent of Education.)

AS HAS been already stated, the increase in the number of pupils attending school was 16,587 and 14,058 over the previous year, while the number of different pupils at school during some portion of the year was upwards of 83,000. These results are very gratifying, and demonstrate the ability of our school system to overtake the task thus far assigned it, viz, to place the means of Education within the reach of all. It will be seen by reference to Tables B and C that there is great room for improvement in the matter of regularity of attendance. It should be borne in mind, however, in examining the Tables referred to that the enormous increase of registered pupils for the past year, would unfavourably affect, for a little, the per centage in daily attendance throughout the Province.

In many sections there are children who do not attend any school, simply because their parents have no appreciation of the value of Education. In this connexion, I beg to repeat what I stated in my Report of last year, and to present the same suggestions by way of a remedial measure.

"The rate-payers of the section had provided ample school-rooms and teachers, instruction was free to all, but ignorance so blinded the eyes of many that the most trifling matters were deemed of more importance than the education of their children. Thus, notwithstanding the noble efforts of the ratepayers in many sections to expel ignorance and its dire effects from their midst by providing, free of charge ample means for the training of all the children with which they are surrounded, they are still compelled to witness many growing up at their very doors to manhood and womanhood in worse than ignorance. This is unjust to rate-payers, and a crime against society. Moreover, the section is defrauded of money which, if these children were in attendance at school, it would be entitled to draw from the County fund. So keenly are these evils felt that in many places a strong feeling exists in favour of a compulsory enactment on the subject. While I should deprecate any extreme legislative enforcement of parental obligations in this behalf so early in the history of our public school system, yet it is a fair subject for consideration whether it would not be advisable to empower the trustees of sections where ample school accommodation has been provided, to enforce under the sanction of two-thirds of the voters present at the annual meeting, the attendance at the public schools of all children between six and fifteen years of age who are not receiving instruction elsewhere or are not debarred from such attendance by any physical or other legitimate disability. Such an enactment would be safe, since it would take effect only as the country became prepared for it."

## COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

AT the recent session of the Legislature the following petition was presented from the Trustees of Section No. 2, Lower Town, Yarmouth, embodying a resolution in favour of compulsory education passed at the last annual meeting of the section:

To the Honorable the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned Trustees of School Section Number Two, in the Town of Yarmouth,

HUMBLY SHEWETH,—

That the inhabitants of this section, aided by the liberal provisions of the school law, have brought the advantages of a good common school education within the reach of every child in the section;

That many of the poorest of the population do not appreciate this privilege, but are allowing their children to grow up in idleness and ignorance;

That all the means of persuasion have been tried but have failed to remedy this evil;

That at the last annual school meeting in this section the follow-