

COMPANION AND TEACHER

We Study to Instruct; We Endeavor to Amuse.

Companion Publishing Co.,
Publishers and Proprietors.

LONDON, ONT., FEBRUARY, 1877.

Volume II., No. 4
Published Monthly

Editorial.

The New School Bill.

The School Bill submitted to the Legislature by the Honorable the Minister of Education, has passed its second reading. It is entitled a "Bill to amend the several acts respecting the Education Department, Public and High Schools, and the University of Toronto." Although strictly speaking the Bill, as its title implies, contains only amendments to the existing laws, nevertheless, some of them are so important, embodying as they do new principles, that certain parts of the school machinery will be entirely changed.

After the Bill has passed we shall give the substance of it. The following proposed amendments show the direction in which it tends and the parts of the school system likely to be most deeply affected. It is contemplated to empower the Education Department to grant equivalents to candidates at the examination of teachers for such High School examinations as they may have passed. To meet the urgent necessity for trained teachers, the County Model School system is proposed; also a greater restriction of the existing Normal Schools to the work for which they were established. Third-class certificates might then be granted to graduates only of the County Model School, and second, to those who had attended at least two months one or other of the Normal Schools. To encourage teachers to proceed to the higher certificates the Education Department will pay travelling expenses to the Normal School, and part of the maintenance while attending. The chief aid to continued improvement of the Teachers' Association—will be encouraged as provided for in the ninth section, (b), "An annual County payment of the sum of fifty dollars towards the County Teachers' Institute or Association," clauses ten and thirteen of the first section bring them under the control of the Minister of Education.

Terms and Holidays are fixed in the 15th clause. The first teaching term "shall begin on the third of January, and end on the seventh of July; the second term shall begin on the 13th day of August and end on the 23rd December.

The twenty-first clause abolishes City Boards of Examiners. The twenty-third provides for the

protection of the teacher in the matter of payment for vacations covered by the time for which the agreement is drawn or following the expiry of the time of engagement within a fortnight. Agreements which are evident evasions of this enactment "shall be invalid and of none effect."

The third section provides practicable and reasonable means of establishing and conducting Township Boards of Trustees. Provision is also made for their repeal, and for the consideration of the claims of union sections. The text of this section will be given in a future number.

A clerical omission occurred in the consolidation of the School Act of 1874. It related to the formation of union sections. Some harm resulted, but the Bill wisely minimizes the evil by declaring the unions existing in fact, whether in accordance with the provisions of the law in that behalf or not, to have been legally formed. The mode of forming union sections (fifth section) is to be entirely changed. Hitherto they were formed by the Reeves and Inspectors concerned. The amendment is to empower the Township Councils to form them on the report of a committee appointed by the Township Councils. The power of dissolving a union section held by the Council of a municipality, which was taken away by the Consolidated Act of 1874, is restored. But the union can be dissolved only in answer to a petition of the majority of the ratepayers of the part desired to be separated. There is no provision to alter the boundaries of a union section. Cases might arise in which there is just reason and urgent need for the alteration of a union. Unless sec. 3, sub-sec. 4, be amended, there will be no means of altering except by dissolving and re-uniting the union section.

A new section is added to 37 Vic., c. 28, s. 105, providing for the better inspection of schools in remote districts.

The seventh section is a much required amendment of the duties of the Assessor and Collector of the township. It requires the former, in recording each taxable person's religion, to distinguish between Protestant and Catholic, and whether supporters of public or separate schools. Omissions and mistakes are to be appealed to the Court of Revision.

Section eight speaks for itself. There is no valid