

representatives, giving this striking proof of their respect for the ability and high character of the profession."

Mr. Kay-Shuttleworth goes on to say that the Prussian Government found it necessary to protect teachers in their relations with the general public. "A law was passed that no teacher who had been once elected, whether by a parochial committee, or by trustees, or by private patrons, should be dismissed except by permission of the country magistrates. This protected the teacher from the effects of the mere personal prejudice of those in immediate connection with them."

Now, we teachers in Canada are almost defenceless in this respect, and a glance at the position here will shew what must be the effect of this condition on us individually and as a class. There are throughout this Province very able teachers who are engaged in carrying on some of the most important schools in the country,—and what are the terms of their engagement.

Remember for a moment the conditions I have just read, and compare with them the conditions I am about to state.

The teachers to whom I refer are employed not only in the largest cities in Canada, but also in villages and rural districts, for academies, &c. They are engaged by boards of trustees, not one in a hundred of whom has had the slightest experience in teaching, or is skilled ever so little in the science of pedagogy—and what are the terms of engagement. They are engaged only for one year; at the end of each year their engagement terminates and must be renewed.

I challenge anybody to instance from any department of skilled labour among our community as humiliating—as servile a condition as this! I regard the shop girl or telegraph operator—the brakeman or switchman on a railroad, all of whom hold their situations (like our judges) during good conduct—I regard them as far above these teachers in the terms of engagement they exact, and in the confidence in their ability thus expressed by those who employ them.

But it may be argued that the precaution is a necessary one—the interests at issue are so great, &c., &c.

This is all very true, but our interests are at stake too, and besides this we are not the only members of the community who are entrusted with great interests—ministers of religion—judges—bank-clerks—government officers and many others have committed to their care vast interests, and they are not so open to inspection as the teacher, nor would frequent changes in their cases be more harmful. Yet none of them are compelled to take service on such degrading terms. It would be fair enough to engage a teacher for a certain period, (say 6 or 12 months) on trial and then decide. And I maintain that a teacher here, who shews to the satisfaction of a school-board by such trial, that he is in every way qualified for his post, ought to be engaged on some terms agreed on, not so humiliating as those referred to. Such terms as these, in themselves, argue nothing but a lack of confidence between the people and the teacher, and the longer they exist the lower will the teacher fall in the scale of society, and the more will society suffer in its turn from the fall.

Now we are not under such a Government as that of Prussia,—we are under as free a Government as any man can wish for,—many lines of life are open to us,—we ought not to wish for or need Government interference to secure us equal rights with our countrymen.

We, above all others, are responsible for this condition of affairs, and we alone can bring about a change.

That this condition may not be lightly regarded, and to strengthen what I have just said, I will read the reasons of the Prussian Government for giving as much liberty as possible to teachers, and for fettering their hands as little as possible.

1st. "Because the teachers of Prussia are a very learned body, and, from their long study of Pedagogy, have acquired greater ability than any persons in the art of teaching. They are, therefore, better qualified than any other persons to conduct the instruction of their children; but if those persons who have never studied pedagogy could interfere with them and say—"You shall teach in this way or in that—or else leave the parish"—the teachers would often be obliged to pursue some ridiculous, inefficient method, merely to please the whim of persons not experienced in school management, and the enlightenment of the people would thus be considerably retarded."

2nd. "Because if the ministers, or parishioners or school trustees had a right to turn away a teacher, whenever he chanced to displease them, the teachers would always be liable to, and would often suffer from, foolish personal dislikes, founded on no good ground. They would thus lose their independence of character by being forced to suit their conduct to the whims of those around them, instead of being able to act faithfully and conscientiously to all, or by being exposed to the insults of impertinence of ignorant persons, who did not understand or appreciate the value or importance of their labour, or by being prevented from acting faithfully to the children from fear of offending the parents; and they would thus, generally by one or other of these ways, forfeit at least some part of the respect of the parents of their children, and would, consequently, find their lessons and advice robbed of one half their weight, and their labours of a great part of their efficiency."

These are very weighty reasons for the existence, in Prussia, of something which does not exist for many of us here now, nor for many other very able teachers in this Province. And if any teacher present can shew how we are to get this thing except by our own determinate endeavours, he will undoubtedly confer a great boon on those who are now or who may in future (as any of us may) be in the humiliating position I have described.

No; I am convinced that nothing but increased mutual respect, increased determination to uphold one another, increased confidence in ourselves and in our worthiness to be regarded at least as confidential servants—nothing but these can ever raise us to such a position among our fellow-citizens of this free country as is guaranteed to Prussian teachers by a powerful government, which stands and grows (so the whole world says) on the foundation built by the teacher.

The condition of the Prussian teacher naturally leads us on to the consideration of the third and last relation I have proposed to discuss this evening.

"The relation existing between men and women who are acting together *and with the Government of the country* in what is now recognized as the most vitally important labour of the community."

This relation is one much easier to deal with than either of those we have been discussing. The first one, from its very nature, was delicate to handle and could not be probed very deeply as to its existing condition.

The second relation was a special one, in which the teacher occupied a position in the community peculiar to his own class, in some respects.

But the relation we are now to consider he occupies under exactly the same circumstances as exist for all other members of the body of the people.

To realise this fact let us consider, for a moment, the action and relation to government of other associations which now exist in all civilized communities. Such associations and others.

These associations are similar to our teachers's associations; they are formed independent of government by merchants, lawyers, agriculturists, and are supported