

INDUSTRIAL DRAWING.

It is well known that New Brunswick has for some time taken an advanced position on the question of Industrial Drawing, and it is with pleasure that we publish the following letter of the able and most energetic Chief Superintendent on the subject.

In a prefatory note Dr. Rand says:—"It seems to me that when mineralogy, geology and agriculture command so large an attention from the Government of Canada, it is reasonable to suppose that it can as legitimately give attention, in the safe way suggested, to the economic aspects of industrial art, its relations to the industries of the people, actual and potential, in all the chief communities of Canada,—just as emigration agents are sent out to set forth the resources of the country. Were there a competent adviser in art education whose services, by way of suggestion and criticism, were available on the application of any community or province, we should be able to avail ourselves at the outset of the dearly bought experience of the world, and could use it to purpose as the years go by, and the industrial contest grows sharper."

TO THE HONORABLE SIR LEONARD TILLEY, O. B., K. C. M. G.,
MINISTER OF FINANCE, Ottawa:

Sir:—Having been associated with yourself for five years on the Board of Education of this Province, I venture to bring before you, as Minister of Finance of Canada, the matter of Industrial Art Education,—a subject, in my judgment, of great moment to the people of all our Provinces, and of interest to all especially concerned in promoting the industrial well-being of this Dominion.

The influence of International Exhibitions upon the manufacturing and other industries of the world, from the first in London in 1851 to the most recent in Paris in 1878, has been most marked, tending directly towards their elevation and increased value. This has been observable most distinctly among the intelligent and progressive nations. In all cases where great improvement in manufactures has followed one of these Exhibitions it has been through the influence upon, and changes made in, the Educational system of the countries affected. Thus the first Exhibition in London in 1851, which disclosed national deficiencies in taste and design in England as compared with some other countries, was immediately followed by the adoption of instruction in Drawing as an element in Education in the National Schools, by the organization of a Museum of Industrial Art (the South Kensington Museum), and the establishment of a Normal Art Training School in connection with the Museum, for the education of competent teachers in Art.

The progress made by England in the development of national taste, and the increase in value of her manufactures, was so prominent a feature in the next Exhibition in 1862, that a French Commissioner, empowered to examine into the causes of this extraordinary advance, attributed it mainly to the teaching of drawing in the public schools and the provision of trained teachers of Art in the Normal Art School. Such a school had not previously existed in France, but was then at once established at Clugny, near Paris. The Commission also reported:—"Among all the branches of instruction which in different degrees, from the highest to the lowest grade, can contribute to the technical education of either sex, drawing in all its forms and applications has been unanimously regarded as the one it is most important to make common"—Com. report, 1863. Later on, a similar commission sent by the French Government to examine and report upon the Educational Section of the United States Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, in 1876, after especial attention given to the display of courses and systems of Industrial Art Education, reported that Massachusetts had, under the guidance of Walter Smith, marvellously well solved the problem of industrial art education for the masses of the people, and in view of the progress made, suggested to the French Government that "France must defend that pre-eminence in Art which has heretofore been uncontested. She has enormous resources which ought to be developed by well-planned primary instruction. With us, as elsewhere, it is not enough to have excellent special teachers of drawing, it is not enough to have good courses and good special schools; but all teachers, male and female, must be able to give the first instruction in drawing, in daily classes, to all scholars. France, which has gone to work energetically after her misfortunes, ought to devote herself to the study of drawing, with no less ardor, and reinvigorate her productive powers at the very sources of art."—Report, 1876.

After this report had been duly considered a large number of Inspectors of Drawing in the Public Schools were appointed, and a more scientific treatment of the subject required in the instruction,

changes which had already borne fruit when the Exhibition was held in Paris in 1878, and were there displayed in the Educational Section.

It has been observed that the wealthiest and most successful manufacturing countries in the world are those in which the greatest encouragement is given to technical education as a continuation of general education in Public Schools,—a logical result of infusing the elements of taste and skill into the products of the factory and the workshop, which, without such elements, lack the attractiveness that finds a ready market for them in all civilized and refined communities.

A judicious and reasonable expenditure, therefore, upon the development of the values of manufacturing industries by the Government, who alone are sufficiently broadly interested in their elevation to take action in the premises, is really an economical investment. This is a necessary, surely, in Canada, with its constructive and manufacturing industries to be sustained and developed, and new ones created, as in the older countries which have all the advantages of historical art treasures, organized and matured systems of industrial and professional education to strengthen and invigorate their productive powers, and boundless wealth to fertilize them. Indeed it is only reasonable to infer that in the unavoidable absence of some of these advantages, the attainable element of a well-organized and thorough scheme of education in Art becomes all important.

A neighboring and kindred nation in the United States has felt the truth of this view, and has acted upon its convictions. Unable, as we have been, to produce its own art teachers, the leading educational and manufacturing State of Massachusetts secured for the initiation and organization of its industrial art scheme an educator from the mother country, who from the period of the inception of this art element in public education in England had been an active participator in the important work there developed. Under his direction, and in the short period of six years, so great a progress had been made in 1876 that, as already quoted, the French Commissioners, representative of the most artistic nation in the world, recognized the significance of the progress by remarking, after the examination of the evidences of that progress at Philadelphia, "France must defend that pre-eminence in art which has been heretofore uncontested." The results which have since transpired have justified the language of the Commissioners. Already the effects of this general education in the elements of art of a whole people are becoming apparent in the development of new home industries, the elevation of public taste, and the economic utilization of the hitherto undeveloped but undoubted genius of the people in the direction of the most artistic and most profitable industries.

This enfranchisement of a people with the suffrage of the beautiful can only be accomplished through the general diffusion of taste and skill by means of education in art. Besides being the direct way, it is obviously the only one possible for us, a new country without the accumulation of historic treasures and unlimited wealth to assist us in our path upward and onward.

I regard this matter as being to-day the most important of social questions, for in it are contained, 1st. the economical problem of fructifying our resources and industries and protecting them from the aggression of superior skill from without, and 2nd. the educational responsibility of providing a practical education for our country which shall fit it for the inevitable competition with the world that is in store for all countries, young and old, becoming keener and more general day by day, and for which we cannot be too soon prepared.

During my examination of the schools of Great Britain and Ireland in 1870, I was deeply impressed by what I everywhere saw done in the schools in the elements of drawing and design. On my return, I addressed the Alumni of Acadia College, urging the establishing of a chair in the College for study of the elements of graphic art. On assuming the responsible duties of my present office in 1871, I determined as early as practicable, to introduce the elements of drawing and design into the schools of this Province as a factor in our common school education. In 1874, drawing was made a subject of study in all the schools of Fredericton, and almost immediately thereafter, in all the schools of St. John. Through the work done in the Normal School this branch of education rapidly found a place in the schools of the more important districts of the Province, and, in November 1879, the Board of Education provided that the elements of drawing and design should be a constituent part of the course of instruction in all the schools of the Province. I am aware that considerable has been done in the same direction in Ontario and Quebec, more especially during the last two years in the schools of