

The development in the direction I have indicated must come in through and by the teaching profession. By some process we must get men and women presiding over the common schools who will not feel that their duty is achieved when they have secured the average standard of scholarship. The supreme need of our educational system is the unceasing and painstaking effort of men and women who will realize that their first duty is character building, and that along with the lessons in arithmetic, geography and history must go an unfolding and upbuilding of the higher spiritual qualities of our nature.

This is what I call teaching religion in the public schools. It is not what is generally understood by teaching of religion. The common idea is that the catechism should be taught, Bible lessons unfolded, and denominational tenets enforced. True religion is a question of soul culture, and this can be done by deducing and maturing high ideals of what true living and true character are. All this, in one word, I say is the present great desideratum in our educational system. It is, in the words of the beginning of this article, "the one thing lacking."

### Education in Nova Scotia.

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#### III.

My former articles were fault-finding and destructive in their tendency. Perhaps it is time to repair the breaches. Doubtless I shall find it more difficult to build up than to tear down—to construct a faultless system than to find blemishes and defects in those that already exist. I shall not indeed hope to picture a school system for Eutopia; for, not to speak of subjective and personal limitations, the conditions which one has to provide for in the educational field are so untoward and conflicting that it seems hopeless to think of devising anything which shall have such perfect adjustments as to be above criticism. I may add here, also, that space will not admit of full detail, so that I must limit myself to a general outline of the scheme which I have to propose. In the work of demolition, I say unhesitatingly that our system of making the small area called a school section in Nova Scotia, but known in other countries as a school district, the unit of organization and maintenance, should be abolished. This would be less imperatively demanded if population and wealth were evenly distributed over the country, but even under such conditions there would remain very cogent reasons for taking a wider area as the unit. Doubtless this proposition will to many appear like the

wildest rant. Our little school section with its three trustees and its various local attachments is such a time-honored institution, and people generally are so conservative in their tendencies, that any scheme which strikes at its integrity will seem to timid folk revolutionary or even dangerous to the good order of society. It may be re-assuring to these people to know that many countries ranking among the most progressive in educational affairs have abandoned the old-time school section (district) as the unit of organization and maintenance. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New Jersey and various other states are examples.

The area best suited for the larger unit, whether county, township, or municipal ward, may be open to question. For some reasons the county may be considered too large; the ward is at the other extreme. In regard to size the township would serve the purpose best; but these divisions, which formerly were units for parliamentary representation and for such other local purposes, as providing for the poor, and care of roads and bridges, have fallen into disuse and now have a merely nominal existence. Machinery usually runs more smoothly along accustomed lines, and hence it seems advisable to adopt the same unit for school purposes as for other local affairs. I shall assume then that, all things considered, the county is the proper unit in Nova Scotia for the purpose under consideration.

My scheme also contemplates the abolition of the existing Boards of School Commissioners and the substitution for them of an Educational Board with larger powers for each county, elected by the different wards in the same manner as are now elected the County Councillors. This Board should have the combined authority and jurisdiction of the present School Commissioners and School Trustees, having under its control the bounding of school sections, locating and building of school houses, employing of teachers, and levying of taxes.

As far as practicable the Provincial Grant should be divided among the counties on such principle as to equalize the local taxes. This is a matter which will require much care and good judgment, as the standard in estimating the value of property is likely to vary in the different counties. The grant allotted to a county should be paid directly to the County Board. After estimating the amount required for school purposes within the bounds of its jurisdiction and deducting the provincial grant from this grand total, the Board should levy upon the county for the balance.

It should be the aim of the Board, as far as possible, to treat all sections alike in so far as the character of the schools is concerned. If, however, any section