

The address of the able President—those on the books of Euclid, common sense or logic, modern culture, the moral elements in common school education, were all highly interesting, and were sublime displays of eloquence and deep thought, but none are of so much practical and vital importance as the discussion of the subject which forms the title of this letter.

Sooner or later this question must be taken up and definitely settled.

The shameful mismanagements, and ignorant and arbitrary conduct of many of our School Section Boards, as now constituted, are beginning to cause a ferment in the minds of the ratepayer. The members of many of these boards can barely read or write, and are incapable of examining the junior classes of the schools over whose educational interests they are appointed to preside. The effect is that our schools, upon which the expenses greatly increase, are no better managed than in the days of local superintendents and inferior teachers.

The ill-feelings, heartburnings, to be found in nearly every school section in Ontario are, to men of sense, easily accounted for.

On the one side, are conceited teachers and educated inspectors, with little or no real power; on the other side are found, as a rule, ignorant and unlettered trustees with almost absolute authority.

Upon the effects of such a combination for the purposes of school management, it does not need a Daniel to pronounce judgment.

Amongst the outlines of Mr. Turnbull's paper, given by you, I find the following disadvantages in the Township Boards plan:—

"The change not yet demanded by the people." Did the people demand a change in the former system of local inspectors, in the Rate Bill, or in many other of those reforms that have been adopted in our school system within the last decade?

To wait for a reform until it is generally demanded by the people, is a very lame excuse for not improving that which common sense shows to be rotten. It would be a feeble Government that waited to bring in all its Bills until the people had expressed a demand for the improvement or reform. To my mind, it is the duty of the Council to take this subject into consideration and to take action upon it, as they have done upon very many other less important and more important matters, without waiting for the expressed demand of the people. If they do not consider it desirable to effect the change without the given consent of the people, it is at least their place to submit the question in a formal and practical shape for the opinion of the public.

The abolition of the Rate Bill was adopted by law without any immediate reference to the people, and I am sure there would have been plenty of opposition to that clause, one effect of which has been that I, a farmer on two hundred acres of land, pay for the education of a large number of the children of mechanics in the neighbouring village, who (the mechanics) are in the receipt of from \$1.50 to \$3 per day. Whilst their children are educated at my expense, my taxes amount to the nice little figure of 56 odd dollars, or at the rate of nearly *eight mils* in the dollar.

And yet there was no squeamishness about "the change not having been demanded by the people" before the abolition of the Rate Bill.

The second disadvantage as shadowed forth is "Poor and small sections assisted by the more wealthy part of the townships." I can, Sir, find no words to express myself in regard to the adoption of this reason as against the establishment of Township Boards, better than "this is indeed mean." The present system is willing that I, who send no child to school, should pay three times the school tax of my grocer, my blacksmith, and free schooling for the mechanic in possession of an income of from \$500 to \$900 per year; but it shudders at the idea of any of my \$56.00 per year going to benefit poorer sections. I thought that the grand principle constantly paraded by the advocates of free and compulsory education was the improvement of the people generally. Surely, then, if I and others, in similar circumstances, are to pay for the education of other people's children, we should be permitted the satisfaction of knowing that our money has been appropriated not to wealthy sections and people, but to poor or small sections.

I would simply ask why, on the principle of free and compulsory education, the acme of philanthropy, the poor or small sections should not be assisted by the more wealthy part of the township?

Next comes "Let what is considered by some well enough, alone." Was there there ever any system of religion, of finance, or of general polity, aye, or any system of injustice, cruelty, roguery or blasphemy, but was not considered by some well enough?

The man who could advance such a reason for the retention of any system, against which, it cannot be denied, there are strong advocacies, must be near his last resource for argument.

"A desire to retain power, and a fear that the new board would not take a sufficient interest in all the schools."

What an argument! We are not to change the system, because the present trustees "desire to retain power." Of course they do. The more ignorant a man and the less fit for a position, the more eager is he to retain power, and the more reason, in the eyes of sensible men, for preventing his accession to a new lease of authority.

And, then, why would not the new board take interest? There would be a representative to watch the interest of his own section, and he would have to take interest, to protect his own section at the general board.

I feel, Sir, that this is an almost inexhaustible subject. For my own part, I am at a loss to find, nor have I heard of a single argument worthy of a moment's consideration, in favour of the retention of the present "School Section" system. On the other hand, there is to my mind, and although the mass of the people have not yet publicly declared it, I believe, to them, all the arguments, as shadowed in your report of Mr. Turnbull's paper, are full of suggestion and are of great weight.

The permanency of teachers, convenience to parents, saving of expenditure, an *impartial tribunal*, teachers' residences, &c., &c., &c.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

SCHOOL TRUSTEE,

Co. of Wentworth.

13th October, 1873.

6. AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE FOR ONTARIO.

In the address of the President of the Provincial Association we find the following reference to the new Agricultural College for Ontario:—

"It is proper to direct your attention specially to the proposed Agricultural College and Model Farm. During the present year the Ontario Government have purchased the farm of Mr. Stone, near Guelph, for the purpose. It is one of the best farms in the Province, and in every respect admirably fitted for the institution. It is pleasing to be assured that it will be soon opened for the reception of students. In Ontario we need an institution in which *teaching the science and practice of agriculture is the leading feature*. We have tried the same experiment which has been so often tried elsewhere, with invariably the same result, that is, we have tried to unite an agricultural school with a literary institution, on the theory that an agricultural student could combine a literary course with an agricultural one; the result has been failure. The literary has overshadowed and extinguished the other. The *general* has overpowered the *special*. Notwithstanding the teaching of an able professor in our own University College this has been the result. The same thing is the case at Cornell University. A large endowment was given to New York for an Agricultural College, and that was ceded to Cornell, and an agricultural faculty was established, but as part of a great literary institution, and the result has been that in a University roll of several hundreds the students in a given time number less than twenty. We propose that our farmers' sons shall receive that kind of training which has a special reference to the profession of agriculture; in other words, that as in the case of other professions, they shall be trained for their own profession, taught scientific and practical agriculture, and that they shall also be taught to feel that the profession of agriculture is a noble pursuit, a pursuit first in importance to the world, and largely free from temptations to vice, and very favourable to the practice of virtue. The Ontario Government have secured the valuable services, as Principal, of Prof. McCandlers, formerly of Glasnevin, Ireland, and lately of Cornell University. Under his auspices we hope to have a prosperous career for our Ontario Agricultural College and Model Farm. To the farmers of Ontario this institution belongs, and they ought to give it their confidence and extensive patronage.

"The Government and Parliament are supplying these valuable privileges—see to it that your sons take advantage of them."

7. BOTANY IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The efforts made by the Chief Superintendent of Education to promote the study of botany among the youth of Ontario are deserving of all praise. As a first step in the attainment of a very desirable object, the little compend prepared and published by Dr. Ryerson is valuable for beginners, and in schools where the organization will not permit the teacher to apply any great amount of time to one subject. But we fear in this, as in almost every other attempt that has been made to popularize the science of botany through the medium of text books alone, the subject will present a dry and forbidding aspect. This is the charge usually brought against the