

that the law enables Boards of Trustees to establish higher English schools in villages, towns and cities. But everyone having any practical knowledge of the country, must know that such schools could only exist in a few populous places. It was to be regretted that the change introduced in January, 1866, was not to be allowed a fair trial. The system of educating the sexes together had been fully tried in many of the United States, and with the very best results. All travellers admit the superior intelligence of American ladies. Having pretty fully reviewed the favourable results of that system in the United States, the Chairman went on to say that in view of these facts he was at a loss to understand the assertion in the *Journal of Education*:—"That it is the received opinion of all educationalists—with very few exceptions, that, however expedient it may be that children of both sexes should be associated together while very young in the study of mere elementary branches, it is better on various grounds that their more advanced education should be conducted separately. It was only since January of last year that the sexes had been placed on a virtual equality in Canadian Grammar Schools, and it appeared to him (the Chairman) that the wisest policy would be to give the plan a fair trial—to encourage girls to pursue a more advanced course of study, rather than virtually exclude them from doing so. A vote of thanks was then passed to the Chairman for his excellent address.

BEST MODE OF TEACHING READING AND SPELLING.

The topic—"What are the best modes of teaching reading and spelling?" next came up.

Mr. J. B. McGann introduced the discussion by an advocacy of the system of teaching the value of sound in letters. He showed where the sounds of certain letters became obsolete, and that education by sound could be carried on from one to two syllables until such time as the pupils could read naturally by the eye in words of three syllables and upwards. Mr. McLelland explained that he did not believe in teaching by sound. Mr. Young, of Stratford, said, that it was a well known fact, that a great deficiency in spelling was observable in many of the advanced pupils; and the main cause of this, he believed to be, that a right beginning in education had not been made in these instances. In the primary department, the teachers had not laid a pure foundation, and the result was very apparent in the advanced pupils. Even with the books at present in use,—and there were many deficiencies in some of them—if scholars were taught from them according to the rules of the Board of Public Instruction, he was satisfied the improvement in spelling would be marked. Mr. Scarlett, Superintendent of schools for Northumberland, agreed in the main with the last speaker; and would go further and give it as the result of his experience, that from the beginning children should be taught to write, as well as to spell, the words. Mr. C. Brown, of Hastings, thought that owing to the irregularities of the English language, if the plan suggested by the first speaker were relied on to make good spellers, there would be very few found in the country. He (Brown) was an advocate for the system of having children commit short exercises to memory in learning to read and spell. Mr. John S. King, of Galt, asked how, in the event of a rigid adherence to sound-teaching could pupils be taught to spell correctly such words as "plough, ruff, rough, cough, &c.?" His (Mr. King's) experience regarding the first elements of spelling, led him, when commencing to teach from the First Book, invariably to copy on the board the letter as he made it; and, as the pupils advanced, the name and sound of the words had to be taken together. Mr. Parsons, of Peel, advocated that for advanced pupils, the teacher ought to read out passages, and that they should imitate him. If that were done, they would beyond question have good readers. Mr. Hodgson, of Weston, believed that the present system of education was defective, inasmuch as under it too little time was devoted to speaking. The sooner they again introduced the spelling book the better. Mr. Crawford, of Newberry, who had taught for 15 years, contended that the use of the spelling book was superfluous. The old fogyish ideas as to the benefit of spelling-books were, he was happy to say, dying out. Mr. Alexander, of Newmarket, said that as far as his experience went, he found no way so thorough as to use the superseded spelling books for words spelled differently, but having the same sound. He was convinced that the spelling-book was a great help to pupil and teacher. In the evening, the subject was taken up again, and discussed by Mr. Husband, Mr. Watson, Superintendent of York; Mr. James Coyle Brown, of Hastings; Mr. D. Ormiston, of Berlin; Mr. David Johnstone, Cobourg; Mr. Coleman, Northumberland; and Mr. Chestnut, Toronto. The topic was then dropped.

REPORT ON PRIMARY INSTRUCTION.

The report was considered as follows:—

1. Your Committee are of opinion that the defects in the primary department of our schools arise more from imperfect teaching than from any serious errors in the programme of studies prescribed by

law for the junior classes in common schools; but that at the same time the programme needs simplifying in some cases, and supplementing in others.—Carried.

2. Sufficient prominence does not appear to be given in the programme to object teaching. Object-lessons in natural history are recommended, and those on other subjects permitted; but the whole course of study might be conducted according to the principles of object teaching, to the great advantage of the pupils. In reply to a delegate,

Mr. Dixon explained that "object-teaching," in the opinion of the committee, ought to extend to *all* the school exercises—grammar and arithmetic as well as the rest. Mr. Alexander reminded members of the danger of carrying object teaching to too great a length. Mr. Chestnut said that the report merely spoke of extending that principle further than at present. Mr. Hodgson said that the ground taken was, that sufficient prominence was not at present given to object teaching. The clause was carried.

3. One of our number (J. B. Dixon, M.A., Colborne) visited Oswego in May, and was afforded every facility for examining the practical working of the primary schools of that city by the Superintendent, Mr. Sheldon, and reports these to be the best conducted schools of the kind he has ever seen. Reading is remarkably well taught there, and it is surprising to see with what diligence and perseverance the teachers keep their classes at a single sentence till every pupil knows every word at sight, and can read the whole in a clear, distinct, and natural tone of voice. In reply to Mr. Alexander, Mr. Dixon stated that he had frequently visited Canadian schools, and never yet saw object-teaching thoroughly carried out in any school in Canada. In Oswego he had seen the system in full and beautiful operation. There, the teachers were specially taught in that method for five months. During that time they were required to teach constantly in this way, under the constant close supervision of the most experienced teachers. The children were made under it to thoroughly understand, pronounce, and spell the words of every sentence they were being taught. It was said the system taught in Oswego was American, but it was not. They borrowed it from an English system.

Mr. Scarlett and Mr. Chestnut thought that this fact as to the origin of the Oswego system ought not to be ignored in the report. The Chairman explained that the Committee to Oswego, were last year instructed to "report upon the practical working of the English system as practised in the Primary School in that city." The clause was carried.

4. Your Committee would recommend that reading and spelling be taught to a pupil just beginning, altogether by the powers or sounds of the letters, omitting the names till the pupil has become somewhat advanced: that is, reading and spelling should be commenced on the Phonetic principle. By this plan each character has only one sound for a time, and the teachers learn the small lessons first, including only the short sounds of the vowels. Says, Mr. Sheldon, in his work on elementary instruction:—"The teacher makes the short sound of 'a,' and asks the children to imitate her. This is continued until they are able to do it with some degree of accuracy. She then holds before the class a small card with the small letter 'a' on it. She asks one of the class to select another like it from the table, calling upon the class to decide as to the correctness of the selection—asks another to point to a form like it on the card—lets other members of the class select other forms like it on the card and on the table—teacher makes several letters on the board—the children decide when she makes this letter. The letter 't' is next treated in the same manner. Teacher repeatedly points to these letters, and the children give the sounds until they get the syllable *at*, which they pronounce repeatedly. This is one lesson. Mr. Parsons had his doubts about the possibility of introducing the "object" system. He was of opinion that the present was an attempt to re-introduce the old phonetic system, which had been tried and failed during the first session of the Normal School. There was a danger of introducing too much oral instruction in schools. He would like to know, also, how a teacher could possibly find time to get through these object lessons for each class. How could he commence at the A B C class and go from it to the highest, and illustrate all his teachings with objects? He liked object-teaching as carried out in Canadian schools, but feared the carrying out of the system to its full length. The clause was then carried.

5. The short sounds of the vowels being learned, and exercises on them being read, the pupil is next taught the long sounds of the vowels, and after having gone through the exercises on the small letters, next learns the capitals, beginning with those like the small ones already learned, namely, C, O, P, S, U, V, W, X and Y; then the straight-lined capitals, I, L, T, F, E, H, A, N, and M; next the curved line letter G, and finally the straight and curved line letters, D, B, R, and J. On this clause the Rev. Mr. Blair addressed the Association, protesting against the adoption of the report. It was very clear to him that if they adopted it a section