

tion. The teacher whose only qualifications for his profession are aptness to teach and scholarship is apt to attach undue importance to the literary subjects in which he happens to be himself most proficient. This generally means an education away from the common industrial pursuits, and specialized instead of all-round development.

The school of agriculture is made to supplement as largely as possible the science work of the normal school, not only during the term, but also during summer vacation.

There has been a gratifying increase in the number of trained teachers in the province, from 403 in the year 1893 to 620 in 1896. They, still, however, constitute less than 30 per cent of the whole number. The fact is that while the average period of service continues to be as low as 6½ years, it will be impossible for any one institution to keep up the supply of trained teachers needed for all the schools. Nor is it desirable that it should. As elsewhere, the colleges must be called in to assist in professional training. There would then exist that variety and interchange which constitute an essential element of healthful life.

There are in the whole province about sixty teachers who have taught over twenty-five years. Suppose that two-thirds of these were willing to retire on a pension of \$200 a year, the annual expenditure for them would be only \$8,000, a small sum considering the advantages that would result. In the common schools there was a decrease of 111 pupils, in the academies an increase of 588. In the academies Grade XII (collegiate) had 83 students, 31 more than in the previous year. Of these, Pictou Academy had 22, Kentville 18, Truro 16 and Antigonish 12. The average ages of the students vary greatly in the different academies.

An interesting feature of the report is a table compiled by the superintendent, giving the chief statistical facts relating to the Nova Scotia schools since 1850, when Mr. J. W. Dawson (now Sir Wm. Dawson) was appointed the first superintendent. Dr. Forrester was appointed in 1855; Dr. Rand in 1864; Rev. A. S. Hunt in 1870; Dr. Allison in 1877 and Dr. MacKay in 1891. The table shows a uniform and moderate increase from year to year since 1865 in the number of pupils and in the expenditure.

To Sir Wm. Dawson belongs the credit of having laid the foundation of our present system of education. He advocated a state system, supported by taxation, the professional training of teachers and a course of study dominated by science. He speaks of a "practically useful education" that will enable our people "to combat the difficulties and improve the advantages of

their position," that will prevent the "rich natural resources of our province from being neglected and ruinously wasted by heedless ignorance." He made agricultural chemistry a part of the public school course.

Mr. Dawson had a worthy successor in Dr. Forrester, a man of equally sound and lofty educational ideals. He also favored an education which developed mental power by and through the study of practically useful subjects, an education which clarified the mental vision by giving clear perceptions by means of a thorough training of the senses and powers of observation.

The report goes on to show that in subsequent years our educationists fell away from the true ideal. "Public education became more academic, pointing from every school in the land through the syllabi of the 'teachers' examination' to the learned professions."

"Now it becomes necessary to retrace our steps somewhat: to develop a sentiment in favor of, and a scientific interest in the industrial vocation of the many."

For every one in the learned professions there are twenty-five engaged in manual occupations. By neglecting the study of our environment and mainly concentrating our attention upon the three R's, we left our young pupils in ignorance of the possibilities of their own country, and inspire their unscientific imaginations with the knowledge of other lands. No wonder so many of them left "the dull old farm" for "Eldorados abroad" and fare worse.

By making the three R's the basis of our education we did not escape even the evils of illiteracy. In spite of a quarter of a century of free schools, the number of those between the ages of ten and forty who in 1891 could neither read nor write, varied from sixteen in Colchester to one hundred and thirty in Richmond, for every ten thousand.

In the three R's we have not the substance of knowledge—in two of them at least, simply the form. There are too many teachers who can do little else than teach the mechanical routine of these *formal* subjects, and even that not well, for their work lacks the interest inspired by the *content* studies. In many of our schools, so-called teachers are merely lesson-hearers. Memory takes the place of reason; questioning takes the place of teaching; words are taken for thought; books for things; and punishment or emulation as a substitute for interest.

By an unfortunate application of the specious argument, "After this, therefore, on this account," much of the greatness of the great men of the past has been improperly credited to their classical culture. There are also other reasons why the old education yields so