

## EDUCATIONAL SKETCH.

(By J. C. PATTERSON, Esq., Ottawa.)

### ONTARIO.

It is now about sixty-two years since the educational interests of this Province first became the subject of legislative interference. In 1807 the first Education Act was passed, establishing Grammar Schools in each of the eight districts into which the Province was then divided, and endowing them with an annual stipend of \$400 each. The Cornwall Grammar School, under the mastership of Mr. Strachan, (late Lord Bishop of Toronto,) had the greatest reputation for efficiency.

In 1816 the first Common School law was passed, and the sum of \$24,000 per annum appropriated for the support of Common Schools; but afterwards, in 1820, this amount was reduced to \$10,000. A Board of Education was established in 1822 for the supervision of the Grammar Schools, and the management of the University and School lands, granted for their endowment by King George III. in 1798. The Board adopted some resolutions, and established regulations, and, a year or two later, attempted the introduction of school libraries. But public indifference on the subject of education was hard to overcome, and, for the next ten or twelve years, it was almost entirely neglected. In 1835 and 1836 a new interest was awakened, but, before any decided course could be adopted, came the attempted rebellion of 1837, which prevented any further attention being given to the subject of education at that time.

In 1841 a bill was passed restoring the Common Schools, authorizing the establishment of Separate Schools, and sketching the outlines of a national system of education. In 1844 the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, the present Chief Superintendent of Education, was appointed, and to him, so entirely did he remodel and reconstruct it, the Province owes its existing system, which is a partial adaptation of the best features of the school systems of New York, Massachusetts, Ireland and Germany, blended and modified to suit the circumstances of the country, but differing also in several points of importance from all other school systems. Some of the chief points of difference are as follows:—1. Religious instruction is provided. 2. The chief executive is a non-political and permanent officer. 3. Taxation for school purposes is voluntary on the part of the various Municipalities. 4. It prohibits the use of foreign books in the English branches of instruction, except by special permission, thus preventing heterogeneous text-books and those inimical to our institutions. 5. It provides for the supply of maps, school apparatus, prize and library books, to all the schools, direct from the Department, and grants 100 per cent. on local appropriations for such purposes. 6. It provides for the pensioning of superannuated or worn-out teachers. 7. It provides for taking and recording meteorological observations at ten selected County Grammar Schools, results being published periodically.

#### *Common Schools.*

The several townships are divided into school sections, each of a suitable extent for one school, and, in each, three trustees are elected to manage school affairs. In cities, towns and villages the schools are managed by a Board of School Trustees elected by the rate-payers. The same general dispositions apply to the Catholic separate Schools. According to the last Report there were 4,496 Common Schools in operation, and 4,900 teachers employed, of whom 2,859 were males and 2,041 females. Attending these schools there were 401,643 scholars, of whom 213,019 were boys and 188,624 were girls. This large majority of boys is fully counterbalanced by the greater number of girls attending private schools. It is to be regretted that the number of children reported as not attending schools amounts to 39,515. This is the more noticeable, inasmuch as no less than 3,912 schools are entirely free, while in the remaining 584 the highest fee charged is 25 cents per month.

The highest salary paid in a county, to a teacher, was \$635; the lowest, \$96. The highest salary paid in a city was \$1,350; the lowest, \$225. The highest salary paid in a town, \$1,000; the lowest, \$180. The highest salary in a village, \$760; the lowest, \$260. The average salaries of male teachers, in counties, amounted to \$261; of female teachers, \$189. In cities, of male teachers, \$532; of female teachers, \$243. In towns, of male teachers, \$464; of female teachers, \$240. In villages, of male teachers, \$409; of female teachers, \$215. This shows a slight increase on the preceding year in the average salaries of teachers.

The expenditure of the Common School branch, according to the last return, was:—For salaries of teachers, \$1,093,516, showing an increase on the previous year of \$26,636; for maps, apparatus, libraries, &c., \$21,354; school sites and buildings, \$149,195; rents and repairs, \$50,634; school books, stationery, fuel and other expenses incurred by trustees, \$148,437—total expenditure, \$1,473,188. Increase on previous year, \$85,955; balance of appropriation on hand, \$197,146.

The receipts during the same period were a trustees' rate of \$799,708 on the inhabitants of the towns and counties, and a legislative grant of \$172,542 for teachers' salaries; also, \$14,611 for maps, prize books, &c., \$51,197; fees from pupils, and from the Clergy Reserve Fund, (the annual receipts from which are placed at the disposal of the Municipalities, and are by them applied to school purposes,) together with other sources not mentioned above, \$280,401. The total receipts amounted to \$1,670,335, which, compared with the revenue of the preceding year, shows an increase of \$62,364.

#### *Separate Schools.*

The Ontario School law also provides for the establishment and maintenance of Roman Catholic Separate Schools. There were 161 of these schools in operation, in charge of 210 teachers. Total number of pupils, 18,924, the average attendance being 10,857. The expen-