

V.—EDUCATION.

GENERAL FEATURES OF CANADIAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS.

Under the British North America Act, 1867, the right to legislate on matters respecting education was reserved exclusively to the provincial legislatures, subject to the maintenance of the rights and privileges of the denominational and separate schools as existing at the time of union or admission of provinces. In general there are two fundamental systems of education throughout Canada, one that of the Protestant communities, free from the control of religious bodies, and the other that of the Roman Catholic French and Irish communities in which education is united with the religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. In Ontario, Roman Catholics, Protestants and coloured people have each the right to establish "Separate Schools" for elementary education, the local rates for the support of these schools being separately levied and applied. In Quebec, the religious minority in any municipality, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant (the Jews being "Protestants" for all the purposes of the School Law), may dissent and maintain its own elementary and model schools and academies or high schools, the taxation of the minority being separate from that of the majority for the three classes of school, except that in the case of the assessment of corporations, the taxes are levied by the majority and divided between the majority and minority in proportion to the number of children of school age. In Saskatchewan and Alberta a separate school may be established by the minority, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, subject, however, to identical regulations as to courses, certificates, inspection, etc. In the remaining provinces there are special provisions for the education of Roman Catholics in the larger cities and towns.

In all the provinces the cost of education is defrayed from the public revenues, provincial and local, and public elementary education is free to parents or guardians, except for certain small fees which are payable in parts of the province of Quebec. With the exception of Quebec all the provinces have laws of compulsory education, but under conditions that differ as between one province and another. As a rule, the provincial laws provide for uniformity in the training of teachers, the use of text books and the grading of pupils. Secondary schools or departments, and colleges or universities for higher education, exist under government control in all the provinces, and the three classes of teaching institution are more or less co-ordinated to allow of natural transition from the lower to the higher. School terms and holidays are arranged to suit climatic and other local conditions. Arrangements for the superannuation of teachers are applied in most of the provinces.

Recent movements in the direction of nature study, manual instruction, school gardens, agriculture, domestic science and technical education are all energetically in progress.