

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

THIRD PARLIAMENT—FOURTH SESSION.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
Thursday, 20th Feb., 1879.

After recess,

Mr. CROOKS continued his speech. He took up the item of the increase in the cost of the training of teachers, which was \$6,559. That item was a new one, and it involved the payment to successful students on account of maintenance for one session at a Normal School of \$2 per week, and the payment of their travelling expenses, amounting \$1,030, the payment to County Model Schools of \$2,000, and of \$1,362 to Teachers' Associations. These Associations were fostered and encouraged as a means of preserving teachers in that full amount of teaching knowledge so necessary to success. The expense of organizing them, in which Mr. G. M. Ross was mainly instrumental, was \$1,860, and printing, stationery, &c., made up the whole sum of \$6,559. The expenditure for organization, &c., would of course disappear in the present year. He proposed also to do away with the practice of paying \$2 per week to students attending the Normal Schools. It had been shown that there was such a desire to obtain a thorough knowledge of teaching that there would be no necessity for stimulating attendance at the Normal Schools. The expenditure on account of superannuated teachers had very much increased. The gross outlay on that account had increased in 1877 \$29,341 as compared with 1871, but the excess of receipts in the latter year of \$9,094 made the net increase \$20,247. The reason of the increase was the policy of 1871, which made it compulsory upon every male teacher to contribute at the rate of \$4 per annum to the fund. The number on the pension list in 1872 was 141, and had increased in 1877 to 298. The total number of teachers placed upon the pension list was 478, but the actual number of pensioners in 1877 was 298; from this it would appear that the number of aged teachers was becoming less rather than greater. The average length of service appeared to be from 20 to 25 years. The law thus made a liberal provision for any teacher who, by old age or infirmity, was no longer able to continue in his profession. The Normal School, Toronto, entailed an increased cost of \$5,027, but the increase admitted of an easy explanation. In 1871 there were six masters in the Normal and six in the Model School. In 1877 there were seven masters in the Normal School—the addition being a Master of Science at a salary of \$1,800—eight teachers in the Model School, and one clerk at \$600. In 1871 the buildings were enlarged, and the Model School made to accommodate 250 pupils and upwards instead of 150 as previously. The next item he would deal with was the Depository stock. The keeping on hand so large a stock of school apparatus, prize books, &c., as was kept enabled the Department to furnish schools with these supplies at half cost. The figures showed that there was a large accumulation of stock, there being on hand on the 1st January, 1879, stock to the value of \$80,000. His intention was to prevent that stock from increasing, and to bring it down as rapidly as convenient, which he could better do, having taken the direct control of the Depository into his own hands. In the management of the Depository there was also an increase of \$3,333. He had been endeavouring to explain the increase on the ground of the development of the whole school system, and this could also be explained in that way. In 1871 the amount of the receipts were \$24,770, and in 1877 \$35,000, upwards of \$11,000 of an increase. The letters received in 1871 were 6,327 and in 1877 7,679, and the number of sales in 1871 were 4,680 and in 1877 7,068. It would thus be seen that the amount of work done in the Depository had greatly increased. There were nine clerks in 1871, and in 1877 thirteen. In the Education Department the letters inwards numbered 12,395 in 1871 and in 1877 19,901; letters outwards in 1871 13,358, and in 1877 24,331; payments to the Treasury in 1871 \$35,450 and in 1877 \$57,786. The Normal School at Ottawa had been an entirely new expenditure of \$14,082, as was also the outlay for confidential printing, \$1,110, which

was formerly done by the Queen's printer. He referred to the proposed expenditure for 1879, and showed that it was less than in 1876, the last year of the late Chief Superintendent of Public Instruction. In conclusion, he summarized the salaries of the officials, which he had previously given. He said that he was conscious of having wearied the attention of the Committee, but if he had succeeded in placing the true reasons of the increases that had taken place in the Education Department, his labour would not have been lost. He moved the first item, \$240,000 for Public and Separate Schools. The hon. gentleman on resuming his seat was greeted with loud cheers.

Mr. MEREDITH said the subject of education had always been kept out of the arena of party politics, and he trusted it would always be so. There could be no doubt that the system of education in Ontario was a very good one, but that it was a very costly one was equally undeniable. There was no reason why the Opposition should not criticise the expenditures to be made. He thought a saving might be effected in the item of \$12,000 for schools in new and poor townships. The inspection of High Schools also cost \$7,500, and this might be reduced by the discharge of one inspector, for he believed two men would be quite enough to do the work. With regard to the school at Ottawa, he thought the Government were responsible for the increase of expenditure caused by it. He believed it would have been more useful if it had been established in a central position.

Mr. HARCOURT was glad to notice that whatever had been the character of discussion upon political questions, the consideration of educational matters had been conducted in a fair and unbiassed manner, but he was sorry that some newspapers and pamphleteers had not adhered to this very excellent rule. (Hear, hear.) It was admitted by all that our system was an excellent one, but it was not uncommon to hear of defects in it. This, however, was not a matter of surprise. In this and all other Departments it was to be hoped that improvements would be suggested, and he thought the Minister of Education had begun to carry into effect a very good improvement in the Bill which he had introduced yesterday. The system must meet the requirements not only of graded schools in towns, but also rural schools where grading was impossible. It must be remembered that it was within the power of inefficient school inspectors, an incompetent board of trustees, a careless teacher, or a number of indifferent parents to mar this system and take away from its perfections in a great degree. In one section would be seen a large and regular attendance of scholars, and both they and the parents satisfied. But in the adjoining section the attendance may be small and irregular, and the parents are dissatisfied and inclined to complain. In one would be found probably an active, competent teacher who was fond and proud of his profession, in the other one who was careless and uninterested in his duties. People in the latter case were apt to complain against the system, but the effects of even the best system might be made derogatory by being inefficiently carried out. As a school official, the three great difficulties he had had to contend against were bad school-houses, irregular attendance, and want of interest on the part of parents. With regard to the first, cause of complaint in this respect had been removed by proper legislation. The other two defects, however, could not be legislated away. As in the case of the village of Hull, of which the Minister of Education had spoken yesterday, the labour market might come into competition with the schools. In some sections it was well known that the school was almost disorganized during some seasons of the year on this account. A good deal of complaint had been heard on account of the change in text-books. (Hear, hear.) This difficulty was not a new one, and was not confined to Ontario. It had been before the people for 25 years, and had engaged the attention of school authorities almost everywhere. The text-book question was entirely under the control of the authorities in each locality. It had also been said that the sudden rise in the qualifications of third-class teachers had been a bad thing for education in the Province. He believed, however, that the standard was not by any means too high, as any boy or girl