

that some of the high schools should be closed. This he thought would be the surest way to arouse the friends of the public schools, for there was no clashing or diversity of interest between the public and the high schools. Mr. Clancy rose and stated that he did not propose exactly to close high schools.

Mr. Harcourt replying said he was glad to hear that, for he could not understand that anyone should have the idea that there was a clashing of interests between these schools. The Minister of Education, he said, deserved to the fullest all the compliments that had been so effusively heaped upon him by the educationists of this continent. He had established model schools and had increased their efficiency by wise regulations. He had introduced and encouraged the kindergarten system, and had in every department of education sought to maintain and increase their efficiency.

Mr. McColl said he was not opposed to grants for high schools, but he thought the public schools were not being aided in the same ratio.

Mr. Meredith said it was not to be supposed that they were opposed to the encouragement of popular education, as they fully recognised the danger involved in an uneducated democracy. He repeated the statement made that there was a feeling throughout the country that the public schools were not receiving their fair share of attention. He would warn the Government not to shun this matter, for if this feeling were allowed to grow it would, he believed, be disastrous to the interests of higher education in this Province.

Mr. Ross, replying to the charges made, said that the fifth form had not been abolished in the public schools, as it was optional with the trustees to have it in any school. The fifth form was in existence in many schools throughout the counties, and they show that the attendance was not falling off. He would state that last year the number attending the fifth class was 12,384, while in 1882 it was only 8,990. At the same time it was true that in some of the rural schools there was a danger that the fifth class would monopolise attention to the detriment of the lower classes. The standard of the fourth class now was equal to the fifth class standard of a few years ago. He challenged the statement that the public schools of this Province were neglected or were not up to the full standard of efficiency. Such a statement was unfair to the 8,000 teachers of the Province, to the 67 inspectors and to the public opinion of this country. It was not true. There was not a scintilla of truth in it, and if the hon. members wanted a commission to ascertain the facts he was prepared to favor it, and to show that the public schools never were in a higher state of efficiency. He hoped the impression would not go abroad that this House was hostile to higher education, or that there was any doubt as to the efficiency of the system. The tendency of the high school system was to place the cost of that course upon the pupil rather than upon the country, and this was in accordance with the principle that should prevail. He did not regret that this discussion had arisen, as it had afforded him an opportunity to give the House some information on this subject, and of stating that the greatest care was taken to conserve the interests of the public school system of the Province.

When the amount for normal and model schools came up, Mr. Meredith asked if some charge had not been made against one of the teachers and an investigation held. The charge, he understood, was the serious one of kissing young ladies. (Laughter.)

Mr. Sol. White—Perhaps he was "peculiarly fitted." (Laughter.)

Mr. Ross—"Probably the young ladies were peculiarly fitted." (Renewed laughter.) Seriously, he added, the charge had not being substantiated. Evidence was called for, but there was none forthcoming.

The full estimates for the department,

amounting to \$655,226 92, were adopted, and the House adjourned at 10.35.

LEGISLATIVE NOTES.

A DEPUTATION OF DOMINION GRANGES WANT THE NUMBER OF COUNTY COUNCILLORS REDUCED.

A deputation from the Dominion Grange, consisting of Messrs. Peter Hepinstall, R. Wilkie, H. Glendinning and Jabel Robinson, was introduced to the Government this afternoon by Mr. Gibson (Huron). They presented the following petition:—

To the Hon. the Attorney-General and Government of the Province of Ontario: The petition of the undersigned Executive Committee, by direction of the annual meeting of the Dominion Grange recently held in the City of London, humbly sheweth:

That if there is any opinion upon which all classes and parties of the people of this Province are united it is that our country is overgoverned. We freely admit the excellence of our system, but with the great majority of our people we believe that in several respects the work would be quite as well done by a less number of representatives. As in former years, we desire to call your attention to the formation of the County Councils. Some 40 years ago when the present system was inaugurated much of the country was sparsely settled which is now closely inhabited. The provisions of the act, which at that time were quite applicable, are now unnecessary and cumbersome. In some parts the population has become so numerous that every member of the Township Council has a seat in the County Council also, and the size of some of the County Councils has been thereby increased until they have become enormously expensive and cumbersome, while in other counties it is not felt necessary to have them reduced.

The plan which we propose has the advantage of giving the people themselves the power to reduce them at pleasure or retaining them as they are at present constituted. It is as follows:—The ballots for the municipal elections to have a blank for the electors to vote "yea" or "nay"; that at any election where the majority vote yea the County Council shall consist of the reeves only, and that each reeve shall be entitled to as many votes as there had been deputy reeves in his municipality in addition to his own. We do not claim that the foregoing method is entirely free from objection, but we do not know of any that is. While we believe this method possesses advantages which are not found in any that we have heard proposed, and it provides as fully for the accomplishment of the objects sought, we again desire to enter our protest against tolls upon both roads and markets, and express a hope that the Government will discover some means whereby both will soon be totally abolished. We take pleasure to notice the action taken by the Government looking to the amendment and consolidation of the drainage laws by appointing a commission to take evidence respecting the operation of the present acts, and hope many of their defects may be removed and means found to reduce the cost of their operation and the expense of litigation which follows. And we hope that if the act known as the Ditches and Watercourses Act be retained it may be restored to usefulness by removing the 50-rod limit which was added to it a few years ago. We are also pleased to learn by the newspapers that some action is likely to be taken to reduce the number of grand jurors, it being an institution that, so far as we are able to judge, might, without injury to the cause of justice, be totally abolished. All of which is respectfully submitted.

PETER HEPINSTALL, Master.

ROBT. WILKIE, Secretary.

HENRY GLENDINNING, } Executive

JABEL ROBINSON, } Committee.

Mr. Mowat said that while the scheme proposed for reducing the number of councillors was supported by some it was strongly opposed by others. It would be