

small grants for kindergartens and night schools, and for pupils in the highest form of Public and Separate Schools who pass the leaving examination.

By statute the amount appropriated for Public and Separate Schools is divided on the basis of average attendance in each respectively. The amount paid to Public Schools in 1893 was \$222,844 45, and the amount to Separate Schools \$18,491 60. The Roman Catholic Separate Schools received over 1-13th of the money voted by the Legislative Assembly, while the Roman Catholic population of the Province is about one-sixth.

Although the amount given for elementary education is not as large as one would desire, still, having regard to the increase of the population, the Legislature cannot be said to be remiss in its duty. In 1871 the amount paid by the Government for elementary education was \$178,975. This sum steadily increased, until in 1893 it amounted to \$291,325, or an increase of 62 per cent. in the last twenty years, while the pupils enrolled have increased only 7 per cent.

There has also been a very substantial increase in the aid given to poor schools. Beginning with \$5,990 in 1871, this grant has increased until it now reaches \$45,000. From the reports of the inspectors I am led to believe that no money voted by the Legislature is more gratefully received or more economically expended. In spite of all we have done for the settlers in the northern districts in the way of railways and colonization roads, they still suffer many of the inconveniences incident to pioneer life. By means of the grants given by the Government the burdens of taxation for education have been greatly lightened, and schools are now established as far west as the Rainy River District under teachers of recognized ability, and this year we hope to be successful in establishing a Public School on the shores of James' Bay. These schools were attended last year by over 10,000 children, and, although the attendance was not as regular as in the settled districts, I am satisfied from the reports of the inspectors that the pupils are steadily advancing in their studies.

The attendance at night schools was till two years ago regarded as attendance at the Public School, and consequently they shared in the grant to Public Schools, on the basis of average attendance.

Three years ago the Legislature, feeling the importance of affording greater encouragement to such schools, appropriated a small grant which went directly to the Board of Trustees for the purpose of defraying necessary expenses. The number of night schools established and receiving aid in 1892 was 32, and the number of pupils in attendance was 2,293. It is proposed to continue the grant, as without it many young men and women, belonging especially to the working classes, would be placed at a disadvantage as compared with those who are able to attend school during the day.

KINDERGARTENS.

Just before I took charge of the Education Department my predecessor had taken steps for the introduction of the kindergarten system of instruction into the schools of Toronto. Such schools were sanctioned by the Public Schools act under the name of "Infant Schools." As this term had no distinctive meaning in this Province, the school act of 1885 was amended to provide expressly for the establishment of kindergartens. So far as I know the Province of Ontario was the first Province or State on the continent to recognize as part of its school system the philosophical teachings of Froebel and Pestalozzi. Even in Germany the kindergarten system has received no State recognition, such schools, though largely attended, being private undertakings. The growth of the kindergarten system is remarkable. In 1882 the first kindergarten was opened in the City of Toronto; now, in 1893, we have 85 kindergartens, with 200 teachers, attended by 8,056 pupils. Kindergartens have been established in nearly every city in the Province, and in several of the larger towns, and I understand they meet with the cordial approval of the ratepayers, are found to be very stimulating to the teachers, and have greatly developed kindly methods of discipline in the management of our schools.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

The percentage of pupils enrolled in proportion to the population of the country furnishes gratifying evidence of the interest taken by all classes in the education of their children. In this respect Ontario leads all the Provinces of the Dominion and nearly every State of the Union. Iowa is the only State that surpasses Ontario in its zeal for elementary education. Let me give a few comparisons:—

Out of her whole population Ontario sends to her elementary schools, 24.95 per

cent.; Maine, 21.12; Illinois, 20.34; Michigan, 20.39; New York, 17.38; Ohio, 21.71; Massachusetts, 16.95; Iowa, 25.80.

An important feature in connection with the enrolment is the relative length of the school year in Ontario and the United States. In Maine the average length of the school year is less than 6 months; in Connecticut, 10 months; in Illinois, 71-2 months; in Iowa, 71-2 months; in Massachusetts, 8 months; in New York, 9

months. The average for the whole United States was only 134 days, or less than seven months, against 208 days, i.e., a trifle over ten months, in Ontario. The average number of days which a pupil in the United States attends a Public School is 871-2 days in the year; in Ontario the average number of days is 1121-2, or a trifle over 51-2 months. In rural districts the average is largely reduced by the irregularity of pupils in the newer districts, and even in the most favored portions of Ontario the severity of the winter seriously affects school attendance. In cities and towns the average in some cases reaches as high as 75 per cent. of the aggregate, or an average of 150 days in the year for each pupil.

There are two reflections germane to the subject of school attendance worthy of notice:—(1) With the irregularity of attendance there is a great loss of teaching force, and a necessarily imperfect development of the child's education. We paid last year \$2,752,629 for the salaries of the teachers employed in the education of half a million of children. Less than half of the number of pupils attended school the whole year, consequently one-half of the sum expended on teachers' salaries must have produced very unsatisfactory results, and one-half the children at school, no matter how zealous the Government or the Education Department may be, must have received but a very imperfect education. The second reflection is that a child who devotes himself to study on an average of 120 days in the year, that is, less than one-third of the whole time, is not in very great danger of suffering either mental or physical disability from the alleged over-pressure of our school system. Even admitting that examinations are exacting and home lessons sometimes unreasonable, one day's study, six hours at school, and two days off, for that is what it amounts to, is not very taxing.

The Germans are a vigorous people, possessed of great vitality and energy, yet the schools of Germany show an average attendance of 78 per cent., with much longer hours of study than we prescribe. Ordinarily, the German schools open in summer at 7 o'clock in the morning and close at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, with two hours of recess during midday. In winter the hours are shorter, but by their continuation system, like our night schools, the studies of the pupils are continued during the evenings just as rigidly as during attendance at the Public School in the day time.

TRUANCY ACT.

By the truancy act of 1891 an attempt was made to improve the compulsory features of our school law. I think the experience of the next few years will show that the small residuum of truant children, whose evil habits the act was intended to correct, has been very much reduced. The rigid enforcement of the act by the public authorities, I am convinced, will have a very salutary effect upon the indifference of both parents and children. The number of convictions in 1891 was seven, and in 1892, 49.

PROGRESS IN ADVANCED SUBJECTS.

There has been a gratifying increase in the number of pupils studying the advanced subjects in the Public School course, such as history, geography and grammar. Taking the statistics contained in the annual report of the inspectors as a basis, it is beyond question that the attainments of the pupils of the Public Schools of the Province are considerably higher than they were ten or fifteen years ago. In every advanced subject of the course there has been a large increase in the number of pupils. Even in the fifth form, which the department was said to regard with some indifference, there has been an increase of over 3,000 pupils in the last five years, although there have been drained from the Public School to the High School in the same period about 8,000 pupils a year, who, had they remained in the Public School, would have entered the fifth form.

CANADIAN HISTORY.

It is particularly gratifying to notice the increased interest taken in the subject of Canadian history—a subject which was first made compulsory for entrance to High Schools by the regulations of 1885. In 1886 this subject was taken by 67,632 pupils; in 1892 it was taken by 135,938. It is impossible to estimate the effect which the study of the history of our own country will have upon the minds of those who are to be the future citizens and rulers of Canada. I believe that much of the wonderful power the American Republic has shown in absorbing and assimilating the large foreign population which has