

PRIVATE.]

STATEMENT.



THE propriety of introducing one or more of the ancient languages into the course of instruction given in the National Schools, deserves the most serious consideration. The National system, as suggested in the fourteenth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, presented in 1812 to the Duke of Richmond, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was intended to be one of an expansive character.

In that report, it was stated that the instruction to be afforded in the schools therein recommended, was at first to be confined to Reading, Writing, and the common rules of Arithmetic; but the Commissioners, at the same time, took care to record their opinion that *“time and experience would determine the expediency and means of giving, to such as might desire it, a more enlarged course of education, and of providing for those whose talents might deserve it, that instruction which their poverty might place beyond their reach.”* They further state, as their grounds for believing that more advantage would, *for the present*, result from giving a limited education to a considerable number, than from providing a better system for a few, *“that masters qualified for the latter purpose could scarcely be procured.”* The principle of progress was thus, at a very early period, laid down as that which the full development of the system should call into action.

Although the letter of Mr. Stanley, now Lord Derby, establishing the existing Board of National Education, was not written for several years after the date of this report, yet, as in support of its propositions it refers distinctly to that document, the latter may be regarded as a fair exponent of the views originally entertained by those whose plan was subsequently adopted. We find, accordingly, that the Commissioners of Education have, from almost the very first operation of their Board, down to the present period, pursued, almost without deviation or interruption, the course of procedure thus traced out for them. Amongst the first duties to which they addressed themselves were—the preparation of a series of school-books—the establishment of a Training Institution, and the appointment of a staff of Inspectors for the supervision of the schools received into connexion with their Board. Soon after the commencement of their labours, they intimated their intention of giving, in their schools, an education of a description very superior to that which had, up to that time, been considered adequate to the condition of the lower classes.

In their second report they set forth the number of professors which were to be established in the Training Institution:—
 I. Of the art of teaching and conducting schools; II. Of Composition, English literature, Geography, and Political Economy; III. Of Natural History, in all its branches; IV. Of Mathematics and Mathematical Science; V. Of Mental Philosophy, including the elements of Logic and Rhetoric.

The wide range and nature of the subjects to be taught by those various professors, indicate the extent and variety of attainments to be required in the teachers, and consequently the character of the education which the latter were to be qualified to impart.

Although all the several professorships mentioned in the report have not been yet actually appointed, still with a

very few exceptions, all the subjects included in this programme have been introduced into the course of the teachers in training, and most of them into the general course of instruction, in some of the ordinary, as well as in all of the Model Schools.

Few of the Commissioners by whom this programme was drawn up now survive, and of those who remain, none are now members of the Board; but neither did they, during their period of office, restrict, nor have their successors since restricted, the teaching in their Training Institution or Model Schools, to the subjects therein proposed. On the contrary, they have kept steady pace with the advancement of public opinion, respecting the requirements for the office of teacher, and have added Chemistry, Drawing, and Vocal Music, to the list. The consequence of such persevering effort to enlarge the field of study, and the range of educational power, has been to elevate the standard of elementary instruction, and to bring within the reach of the humblest ranks, a very high amount of attainment. The effect of this movement, however, on the part of the State, to elevate the education of the lower grades, has been to force the classes for several degrees immediately above them in the social scale, either to sit down with them in the same school, or else be satisfied with that inferior supply which their own unaided resources may enable them to command.

The facilities of education which their own limited means enabled the classes intermediate between the poor and the rich to procure for their families, have, as might have been expected from the unequal competition which must always take place between the State and private individuals, been almost, if not altogether destroyed, by the introduction of the National system; and hence the Model Schools, and many of the ordinary schools of the Commissioners, are attended by the children of parents in very different grades in society, ascending from the families of men in very humble life to those of men of some professional rank.

The report of Mr. Kavanagh, late Head Inspector, on the state of the Model School at Clonmel, printed in the appendix to the 18th report of the Commissioners, (1851,) records the following very striking illustration of this fact: "It must be matter of deep gratification to the Commissioners to learn, that while three years ago the three National Schools in Clonmel, were attended only by the very humblest social grade in the town, and not one of whom paid a farthing for their education, that now, through the influence of the Model Schools alone, the social position of the teachers, and the character of the National system are so raised, that parents in some of the highest stations in the town, not only send their children to the Model and other National Schools, but that many of them even seek for the lowest situations in them for their children." (P. 174.)

The same state of things is found to exist in almost all the District Model Schools, and in many of the ordinary National Schools. Mr. Sheahan, in his report on the Athy Model School, 1855, states that "from the returns, giving the occupation of the parents of the pupils, and the religious denominations of the children, it will be seen that the different classes from the highest to the lowest of the community, as well as the different religious persuasions, are here very fairly represented." (22nd Rep. App. p. 274.)

And in the report of the same gentleman, for 1856, respecting the same school, he says, "the children attending these schools have peculiar advantages, which are not to be found even in the ordinary National Schools, much less in schools of a purely private character; hence it has happened that the private schools previously existing, have all but disappeared." (23rd Rep. p. 100.)

It would be superfluous to refer to further proof of the fact, that the establishment of the National system, and its progressive development, have led to the gradual disappearance, or rather absorption into the National Schools, of nearly all other schools accessible to the children of a great body of the

community. In some districts of the country, this result may be rendered apparent by more striking facts than in others; but that it is confined to no one particular part of the country is evident from the details furnished by Professor M'Cosh in his pamphlet on "the necessity for an intermediate system of Education between the National Schools and Colleges of Ireland"—(1854)—and in his evidence before the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Endowed Schools"—(Query, 10517.)

The statistics supplied by that gentleman refer principally to the northern counties of Ireland, whilst those already previously noticed relate chiefly to the southern; but all establish this fact, that whilst the National system has opened up to a very large and most important class of the community, education of a very high order of literary and scientific attainment, so far as the requirements of agriculture, manual or mechanical trades, and mercantile pursuits, are concerned; yet it has indirectly but effectually shut out all who may avail themselves of its facilities, from all means of any acquaintance with either of the ancient languages—Greek or Latin, of which the latter, as the original of almost all the modern tongues of Southern and Western Europe, as well as being, in a great measure, the key to the construction and right understanding of the English language, itself, is entitled to special attention.

As long as National Education in Ireland was in its transition from its former state to its present development, it was certainly prudent in the Commissioners to restrict their efforts to supply what may be called the absolute wants of the community, and to take care that in all their schools, especially in those of the humblest class, there should be given ample instruction in those elementary branches, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, without which our countrymen can aspire to no higher occupation than to carry the hod or to wheel the barrow. But, as in compliance with the demands

of society, they have already carried out the system far beyond those elementary branches, especially in the education afforded by the District Model and Training Schools, the question now arises, whether the system does not require a still further development, and whether, in justice to the country at large, and to those classes, particularly for whose advantage it was established, a still greater extension should not now take place, by providing instruction, to a certain limit, in one or both of the ancient languages?

During the quarter of a century that has elapsed since Lord Derby, then Mr. Stanley, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, addressed to the Duke of Leinster, the letter which actually had originated the National Board, a great change has taken place in the educational policy of the empire. Since 1831, a Committee of Privy Council on Education has been erected into a separate department of the State, having charge of popular education in the other divisions of the empire; and has been engaged, of late years especially, in carrying forward its work with an energy characteristic of the English temperament. In the colonies too, particularly in Upper Canada, the subject of education has received the utmost attention of the Legislature; and almost everywhere, the duty of the State to educate the people has been practically recognized. The Committee of Privy Council has, from a very early period after its appointment, shown great anxiety to introduce into the schools, teachers possessing a high amount of qualification, as the most certain mode of securing a high standard of education.

In the list of queries required by the Committee to be answered, as a preliminary to the consideration of any application for a grant towards the erection of a Normal or Model School, the party applying is obliged to state "whether Latin will be taught." (See form, p. vi. queries, 16, 16, Minutes of Committee of Council on Education, 1842-43.)

They have accordingly proposed grants, in augmentation of salary, to teachers having obtained certificates of merit, at certain examinations held in three several years of their course.

On the list of subjects in which the teacher *may* be a candidate for examination in each year, in addition to certain others in which he *must* be examined, Latin takes place in the examinations of the first year, as an alternative with Algebra; in the second year, as a special alternative with Physical Science, Higher Mathematics or English Literature; and in the third year, Languages, Ancient or Modern, as a means of intellectual discipline, are mentioned as one of an optional group of a very high character, taking place amongst the following subjects, viz: Mental Science, as applied to Education; Experimental Science, especially as applied to Manufactures and Agriculture; Higher Mathematics, History, and English Literature. The teacher in the third year, if he present himself for examination in one Ancient or Modern Language must, if he take Latin, be able to translate "Virgil's Georgics," and the first book of "Cicero de Officiis," and to turn into Latin prose a passage translated into English prose from the latter work. If he take Greek, he is examined in the "Iphigenia in Tauris" of Euripides, and the first book of "Xenophon's Anabasis;" and if he take a Modern Language, and select German, he must translate "Schiller's Thirty Years' War," and part of "Wallenstein;" if he prefer French, he must be able to turn into English, "Thierry's Conquest of England by the Normans," "Racine's Andromaque," "Athalie," "Iphigenie." (See Min. Counc. on Ed. 1846-7, pp. 9-14.)

In the scale of marks by which the proficiency of the teachers is classified, we find that Algebra or Latin, ranks at 50 in the examination of the first year; and at 60, in that of the second; the highest number of marks in the former, for the first class, being 600; and for the third class,

300; and in the latter, for the first class being 650; and for the third class, 350.

In the schools in Scotland, receiving aid from the Committee of Council on Education, as well those connected with the Established Church in that country, as those not so connected, amongst which are, of course, included those belonging to the Free Church, the elements of the Greek and Latin languages are taught to the scholars. (See Dr. Woodford's Reports: Minutes, 1850, pp. 856-7; Minutes, 1854, pp. 688-711; Mr. Gordon's Report, Minutes, 1856-7, p. 651,) (see Dr. Cumming's Report: Minutes, 1856-7, p. 665.)

In the Chester Diocesan Training School, the teachers are taught Latin, Greek, and French, (Minutes of Council, 1844, p. 631.) and in St. Mark's College, Chelsea, they are taught Latin. (Ibid. 602-3.) In his report on the latter College, Mr. Moseley, referring to the views of the Rev. Mr. Coleridge, the Principal, and to the objections which had been raised against the prescribed course of studies in that institution in which the teaching of Latin had been made, in some sort, its characteristic feature, quotes the opinion of that gentleman as follows:—"I have found no way so direct
 "to strengthen the memory, (of the teachers,) to teach the
 "difference between words and their meaning, and to supply
 "them with a vocabulary adequate to the requirements of
 "their new position, as the repetition of the Latin Grammar,
 "followed by the construction and analysis of easy Latin
 "sentences." Dr. Woodford, in his general report (1854) says, on the same subject:—

"I have taken occasion to remark, in former reports, that
 "as an ability to teach Latin is among the qualifications for the
 "office of Parish School-master in Scotland, a considerable
 "number of the Pupil-teachers make some progress in the study
 "of it, in addition to their prescribed exercises. The difference
 "of their appearance, in the department of Grammar is
 "remarkable." (Minutes, 1854-5, p. 711.) Mr. Temple, now

head master of Rugby, whose scheme of middle-class examinations has lately been adopted by the University of Oxford, and whose opinion in all educational matters is entitled to the highest consideration, says:—"Nothing is more absurd than the common notion that a schoolmaster need know nothing but what he has to teach. On the contrary, *a man is but ill fitted to teach Arithmetic, who is not acquainted with Algebra, or to teach Grammar, who knows no language but his own.*" (Moseley's Report, 1850, p. 59.) That such is the opinion generally prevalent in England, as it has been shown to be also in Scotland, is further evident from the fact, that in the Roman Catholic Training College of St. Mary's, at Hammersmith, Latin is a part of the course which the student is at liberty to pursue, even to the exclusion of Mathematical studies. The Inspector, Mr. Marshall, in his report of 1856, whilst mentioning the preference evinced by some teachers in training for the study of Classics, rather than Science, and the proficiency of some of them in the former, takes occasion to express a doubt whether it should be accepted as an exclusive substitute for Mathematics. (Minutes of Council, 1856-7, p. 784; 1855-6, p. 799.)

In the Roman Catholic Training College of All Souls, at St. Leonard's-on-Sea, which is a Female Training School, the course of instruction includes Latin, French, Algebra, and Geometry. This school was, upon the application of the Catholic Poor School Committee in England, transferred from Nottingham to its present locality in 1856, and of the students in residence in that year, twenty-one were Queen's Scholars. All the teachers employed in the College, with the exception of the teacher of Music and Needlework, hold certificates of merit, and are accordingly entitled to grants in augmentation of salary from the Committee of Council. The school, therefore, appears to be a large participant in the funds placed by the State at the disposal of the

Committee on Education, and the teaching given to the students in training, must be regarded as in accordance with that which the sum voted by Parliament for educational purposes is intended to promote.

It is important to notice the opinion expressed by the Inspector, Mr. Marshall, in relation to the course in this school, which includes, as already mentioned, Latin, French, Algebra, and Geometry. "With respect to the first of these subjects," he says, "there is a special and urgent motive for teaching it in any Roman Catholic Institution, apart from its *immense* value as an agent in developing the mental powers, and in facilitating the study of the English language. Of course the annual examinations will not afford any opportunity of testing the proficiency of the students in this subject, except in their working of the paper on Grammar. But such a study has a value wholly independent of the technical results which it is the province of official inspection to detect and classify."

"With respect to Algebra and Geometry, and especially the latter, I cannot but heartily sympathize with the opinion entertained by the teachers of this Training School, that they are legitimately included in the programme of studies proposed to female students. . . . What valuable acquisitions, Algebra and Geometry are to female teachers, I have had ample opportunities of judging during the last two years. I have noticed in another report, that already many of the female pupil teachers, surpass the males, even in Arithmetic, and I can, in every case, trace the reason of this superiority to the knowledge of the the elements of Mathematics possessed by the teachers of the former, and the good sense with which they apply it. Almost all the students at the Training School, to which I am referring, can work equations with accuracy, and their knowledge of practical Geometry, was satisfactorily shown in the drawing papers, which required for their execution familiarity

“with geometrical construction.” (Min. of Counc. 1856-7, p. 793.)

These extracts from, and reference to, the reports of Inspectors, show the extent of the course of study, in relation to the Classics, as well as to the more advanced subjects, taught in the Normal Schools and Training Colleges in England and Scotland.

On the qualifications and attainments of the teachers, the character and amount of the education which they distribute, must, in a great degree, if not entirely, depend. If there be no Classical instruction accessible to those ranks of the community, from which, in this country, the chief supply of schoolmasters is drawn, it is evident that not only will the latter, as a body, be inferior in attainments to those of Scotland and England, but their teaching, also, must be of a comparatively lower standard. The exclusion of the Ancient and Modern Languages from all the National Schools in Ireland, amounts to a virtual refusal to all the classes whose children frequent them, of those superior advantages and facilities, afforded to the children of the corresponding classes in England and Scotland.

The recent change in the mode of distribution of patronage, introduced by the system of competitive examinations, now almost generally adopted in every department of the Government offices, makes the want of instruction in these branches in the National system in this country, be felt as a very serious injury, if not injustice, by a very large number of the community. As might be expected, therefore, there has been raised a very general demand for their introduction, at least to such an extent as would remove the want complained of, and thus open up to the teachers and pupils in the schools in Ireland, that path to preferment elsewhere made accessible to so many through schools supported by the State.

It is only in the department of languages that the schools

in this country are defective. As has been already observed, the Board has, from time to time, in accordance with the discretionary power indicated in the fourteenth report of the Commissioners of Education Inquiry, introduced into their schools a large amount of scientific and of general knowledge, æsthetic, as well as literary, very far beyond the enumeration of simple rudiments, particularly prescribed in that report. But, having gone so far, and having rightly judged that it was their duty to do so, the Commissioners are—it is submitted—bound, under existing circumstances, to go still farther, in order adequately to discharge obligations of their trust.

The annual reports of several of their own Inspectors have, from time to time, drawn attention to this subject, especially in connexion with the course of instruction given in the District Model Schools.

In relation to this subject, Mr. Newel, Head Inspector, in his report on the Newry Model School, (1856,) thus expresses himself: “If to this extensive course, which may be called almost collegiate, were added some instruction in Latin and Greek, the pupil would proceed at once, and under the most favourable auspices, to the Dublin University, or any of the Queen’s Colleges. The chain would then be complete. As matters stand at present, *there is an insuperable barrier to the advancement of humbler merit.* This ought not to be the case, and its removal, I foresee, will be merely a question of time. The plan recommended would entail no additional expense, as the parties desirous to obtain Classical Instruction, would pay increased fees.” (Report, 1856, p. 91.)

In a report made by Dr. Patten, Head Inspector, and Mr. Simpson, District Inspector, of the examinations of the same school, held in 1855, (Report 1855, p. 257, 2 vols.) these gentlemen state, that “If any proof were necessary for the practicability of uniting a higher class of education, with

“ that ordinarily imparted in Model Schools, we respectfully
 “ submit that this Institution, (Newry Model School,) sup-
 “ plies it. But a year has elapsed, since the important branch,
 “ Physical Science, was engrafted here by Dr. Clarke. Under
 “ his directions in his absence the class was carefully attended
 “ by Mr. Brady, and now we have before us the pleasing fact
 “ of some thirty youths grounded in its principles and trained
 “ to trace effects to their causes, to see in every atom of matter
 “ subject for contemplation and reflection, and in the various
 “ pursuits of life to bring to bear the knowledge now acquired,
 “ whilst in all the ordinary branches of their education, satis-
 “ factory progress has been made. Besides these direct
 “ advantages, the pupil-teachers who are under training to
 “ become schoolmasters, have been so initiated that they will
 “ not fail to pursue the study of natural science, and to im-
 “ part to their pupils in town when appointed to schools,
 “ that information which has been to them so interesting.

“ We would earnestly press on the Commissioners to still
 “ further popularise this Model School, by securing the
 “ services of a Classical master, arranging that each pupil
 “ attending, able to pay 10s. a quarter, shall do so, but that
 “ a few of the poorer boys who may exhibit superior talent
 “ and general merit, shall procure free admission,
 “ and that if possible, one or two scholarships in Queen’s
 “ College, Belfast, shall be open to such free pupils, on
 “ competition, thus affording to humbler worth an opportu-
 “ nity for advancement.”

Mr. Sheahan, Head Inspector, in his Report for 1855, on
 the Clonmel Model School, (Report for 1855, 2 v. 260,) after referring to the fact that *the Model Schools have attracted the confidence of parents in the middle as well as in the humbler classes of society, because affording the best education that their means and opportunities can reach*, says:—

“ We cannot, in these Model Schools, meet all the re-
 “ quirements of the middle classes as regards the education

“ of the children. Classics are not taught them there, and
 “ without a knowledge of classics they are, *no matter how*
 “ *talented and industrious, virtually excluded from the Colleges*
 “ *and Universities*, the learned professions, and THE APPOINT-
 “ MENTS *both in the civil and military services, now disposed*
 “ *of by competitive examination. . . .* We have no schools
 “ in Clonmel, and like towns through the country, at which
 “ persons of moderate means could get their children well
 “ grounded in such a knowledge of classics as would qualify
 “ them for entrance into some one of the Colleges or Uni-
 “ versities, where they would receive such instruction as
 “ would enable them to contend for those prizes against the
 “ sons of those in more favourable circumstances. This
 “ want has long been felt here, and expression has been
 “ given to the feeling, on more than one occasion, at the
 “ public examinations of those schools; and resolutions were
 “ unanimously passed, requesting the Head and District
 “ Inspectors to lay before the Commissioners the wishes of
 “ the meeting on the question. . . . The Committee of
 “ the Mechanics’ Institute at length, tired of the delay, and
 “ despairing of seeing (at least for some time) classical edu-
 “ cation introduced into the Model School, made a united
 “ effort to introduce it into the school attached to the Insti-
 “ tute. The preliminaries were all arranged, and there was
 “ a fair prospect of ample funds to secure and continue the
 “ services of a well qualified classical master; but unfortu-
 “ nately the teacher selected by the Committee happened to
 “ be of a different persuasion from that of many, if not most
 “ of the parents whose children were expected to attend his
 “ instruction, and this, as but too often happens, led to a
 “ division, which was followed by a removal of many of the
 “ pupils, and ultimately only a few remaining to join the
 “ class, the whole thing fell to the ground.”

In the first Report of Mr. Sheahan, Head Inspector, and
 Mr. Molloy, District Inspector, respecting the Athy Model

School, there is set out part of a statement, publicly prepared and agreed to by the parents of the pupils and friends of the Institution, present at the annual examination of the school, held in December, 1854, as a recommendation to the Commissioners:—

“In fine, we would embrace this opportunity of most respectfully representing to the Commissioners, through their agents here present, the propriety of appending classics to their course of instruction, and of thus rendering their system more complete, and, at the same time, more conducive to the educational interests of the country.

“Signed on behalf of the parents, &c., present,

“A. HAUGHTON.

“J. B. MEREDYTH, Solicitor.

“H. F. M'DOWELL, Clerk.

“J. JAMESON, Clerk.

“J. HALL, Pres. Min.”

Independently of the important considerations already suggested, there cannot be any doubt that to the right understanding of the English language, more than of any other, some knowledge of Greek and Latin, as well as some acquaintance with French and German, is absolutely necessary. The English language is derived from all of the three last mentioned, representing, as these do, the successive periods of its history under the Romans, the Saxons, and its Norman conquerors, whilst the first gives their nomenclature to almost all the sciences. The Commissioners themselves have recognized the propriety of giving the pupils some information as to the derivation of the language, for to the Fourth Book of Lessons there is annexed an appendix of prefixes, affixes, and principal Latin and Greek roots which occur in that Book. In the preface to that Book, the attention of teachers is specially directed to these roots; and they are told that, in hearing lessons on those, they will be careful to examine their pupils in the formation of English words from

them, by joining prefixes, affixes, and other words; and that they will also cause them to give, *in addition* to the examples in the book, as many English words formed from the same roots as they can recollect.

“When the teacher is examining in the Reading Lessons,” the writer of the preface goes on to say, “he will make his pupils point out all the words of which he has learned the Latin and English roots, explain them according to their derivation, and show how they are formed.” (See Preface to the Fourth Book of Lessons, p. vi., edition, 1853.)

Dr. Sullivan, in his original preface to his “Dictionary of Derivations,” says—“We are indebted to the language of the Romans for the greater portion of our vocabulary; and consequently the best and easiest mode of acquiring the primitive, forcible, and, in general, correct meaning of English words, is to study their Latin originals. Let the persons who are wont to question the utility of Latin to an English scholar, and to assert that a boy would be better employed in learning a living than in wasting his time over a dead language, examine this book, and they will find that the Latin, though denominated dead, lives and breathes in English and French, and we may add, in almost every language of Europe.”

It cannot be doubted that a teacher who is expected to teach the derivations of words, to explain the manner in which they are formed, and the signification and force of the particles, the affixes and prefixes, which enter into their composition, should possess some acquaintance with the language which he thus attempts to interpret—that he should at least understand the inflections of the nouns and adjectives, the conjugation of the verbs, and some of the general principles of its syntax and construction.

To encourage the acquisition of the ancient languages on the part of the teacher, is to induce him to acquire a new

teaching power, to expand his own intellectual capacity, and thus at once to elevate the condition of the master, and the attainments of the pupil. All parties interested—the teacher and the taught, and, not less than these, the community itself—are thus made to participate, directly or indirectly, in the benefits which must result from such an acquisition. Mr. Keenan, one of the Head Inspectors, in his very admirable report, which is to be found in the minutes of 1855, proves by reference to accurate statistical returns that, in proportion as the classification of the teacher advances, or, in other words, as his attainments become more elevated, there is always found to take place, a corresponding rate of increase not only in the amount of his school fees, but also in the number of pupils attending his school.

That such an extension of the instruction given in the schools of the Commissioners would not be at variance with the object of their trust, is evident from the report of the Commissioners of Education Inquiry, printed in 1825, to which reference has already been made.

That there exists a growing necessity for some such expansion of the course of instruction is evident from the want of such a class of schools as they could thus readily, and at comparatively trifling expense supply—a want, too, to the existence of which, the system which they administer has largely contributed.

So strongly has the necessity been felt in some localities, that private efforts have been made to meet its demands. In the district of Moyle, in the county Derry, the Rev. Mr. M'Ivor, rector of Ardstraw, has, with a laudable anxiety to promote the cause of education in his neighbourhood, endeavoured, hitherto by his own unaided resources, to establish, in connexion with a day school, of which he is patron, under the Board, an evening school in which classics will be taught. He has more than once applied for aid from the Commissioners, and the following extracts from the

reports of Mr. O'Callaghan, the District Inspector, will explain the circumstances under which these applications have been made.

In the report of that gentleman, dated 22nd July, 1857, he says :

“ The manager, the Rev. Dr. M'Ivor, teaches for two
 “ hours every evening, the classes formed for learning the
 “ Latin and Greek languages; he is assisted by two moni-
 “ tors, whom he has prepared specially for this duty. Under
 “ query 10, (vii.,) I have mentioned the books used in this
 “ course. This introduction of classical studies into a Na-
 “ tional School by Dr. M'Ivor, is looked upon in the locality
 “ as a most important boon given to the humbler classes.
 “ The young persons who have joined this school for this
 “ special advantage, are sons of very humble members of the
 “ community—small farmers, or struggling shopkeepers;
 “ some of these lads are intended for schoolmasters, and others
 “ for the sacred profession; *they could not have aspired to this*
 “ *object but for the establishment of this school*; the Rev. Dr.
 “ M'Ivor is making this attempt to supply a want severely
 “ felt by the people. At the head of a large parish, he has
 “ had ample opportunities of learning and appreciating the
 “ wishes of the people on the subject, which has become a
 “ question of vital interest to the North of Ireland. Hedge
 “ schools, conducted by teachers competent to teach the
 “ classics, formerly existed in large numbers, through even
 “ remote country places; and the most illustrious names of
 “ the last century belonged to men who received their know-
 “ ledge of the learned languages in those humble schools,
 “ and who, but for them, must in all probability, have re-
 “ mained in peasant ignorance, and of course in their original
 “ obscurity. *The revival of schools, as easily accessible to*
 “ *the humbler classes, is now universally demanded as a prime*
 “ *want of the age. It is acutely felt that the action of*
 “ *the National System of Education destroyed those means*

“ which the people then possessed of pushing their children to
 “ positions of distinction and of opulence ; and those who feel
 “ the want, complain that the Board, who created it, have
 “ adopted no action to restore to the humbler classes the means,
 “ all-important to them, of preparing their sons for professional
 “ life. Dr. M’Ivor, living amongst the people, thoroughly
 “ understands the vital question, and recognises the genuine-
 “ ness of the popular discontent ; he is devoting his time,
 “ his fortune, and his intellect, to supply this grand deside-
 “ ratum. His success in this school is admirable. He looks
 “ for help from the Board ; he has a plan of action matured,
 “ and a course of classical studies fixed, which he is ready, if
 “ called upon, to give in detail. *In my opinion, the adoption*
 “ *of these views by the Commissioners would wonderfully in-*
 “ *crease the vitality and stability of the system of National*
 “ *Education.*”

In a subsequent Report, dated so lately as 23rd February, 1858, Mr. O’Callaghan again refers to this evening school in the following terms :—

“ The Rev. Dr. M’Ivor (the Manager of this school)
 “ formed, in the year 1856, in this school, shortly after its
 “ connexion with the Board, classes in the Latin and Greek
 “ languages. This department he has hitherto conducted by
 “ his unaided efforts ; the Teacher paid by the Board being
 “ engaged with the English department solely. Dr. M’Ivor
 “ was at first induced to make this experiment of teaching
 “ classics in a National School by the conviction produced
 “ by his long experience that the educational wants of his
 “ own neighbourhood, and of all localities of a rural charac-
 “ ter, are at present unsatisfied. In my last Report on this
 “ school, I took the liberty of entering on the consideration
 “ of the question, and of stating, as the result of my own
 “ observations, that the impression is fixed deeply in the
 “ public mind, of the system of National Education being
 “ the creator of the dearth now existing in reference to faci-

"lities for a classical education; it is a question which has
 "taken deep root in the mind of large and influential classes,
 "particularly of those residing in the rural districts, and
 "comprising, in addition to a highly respectable farmer class,
 "numerous members of all the professions. I have not
 "space to enter fully into this important question; Dr.
 "M'Ivor is trying, so far as one man can, to supply in his
 "own locality those educational wants. He thinks that the
 "Board should, in certain cases, initiate the teaching of
 "classics, and, of course, grant aid on certain conditions.
 "Of this, at all events, I am certain, that, from whatever
 "quarter the aid he requires be given, Dr. M'Ivor is emi-
 "nently deserving of it; he gives three or four hours of his
 "valuable time, on every evening, to the promotion of this
 "object, and has five classes learning the Latin and Greek
 "grammar, Composition, Valpy's Latin and Greek De-
 "lectus, Prosody, Cæsar, and Virgil."

The applications of Dr. M'Ivor, in reference to which the reports of Mr. O'Callaghan were made, very strongly indicate the existing deficiency in the state of popular education in Ireland, and although the Commissioners did not consider that they would be justified in acceding to his request, further than to allow him the use of the school-room; yet, as the circumstances of the school were, perhaps, in some respects, of a peculiar character, the refusal of the Board to give him aid towards the payment of a monitor, cannot be supposed to preclude the Commissioners from the general consideration of the subject now brought before them.

The circumstances already mentioned in Mr. Shehan's report in the Minutes of 1855, in relation to the efforts made to establish a class for instruction in classics, by the members of the Mechanics' Institute at Clonmel, prove that parents, in the very class of the community whose children attend the Model Schools, are themselves strongly sensible of the existing deficiencies of the system, and anxious for its removal.

One most desirable effect which such an extension of the course of instruction is calculated to produce, is the inducement which it will hold out to the older pupils to remain longer under tuition than they do at present.

The complaint that the great majority of pupils do not remain long enough at school to realize any very high degree of attainment, or acquire any confirmed habit of study, is generally prevalent. The object of having a class of senior paid monitors, such as are now in the schools, was evidently to counteract this evil. But if, in addition to the advantages which the senior monitor enjoys, there were also conferred the still higher inducement of Classical Instruction, there can be no doubt that amongst that particular class of monitors, as well as amongst the more advanced pupils, there would grow up a more decided taste for learning, and a much stronger attachment to school studies than are found generally to exist. There is, in fact, no mode by which the period of school instruction would be so much lengthened in its duration, as by the introduction of this new element into the course of education.

These observations have extended much beyond the limits originally proposed—their object, however, is briefly to place the grounds upon which it is submitted, that in the existing circumstances of the country, in relation to its educational wants, the Commissioners of National Education are called upon to provide some means of giving instruction in Greek and Latin, and perhaps, also, in some populous locality, instruction in French,* or some other of the modern foreign languages, in their Model Schools, and in some other schools in connection with the Board, under such conditions and

* By the late resolution of the Commissioners, giving the appointments to the situations of clerk in their office to the successful candidates at competitive examinations held by the Civil Service Examiner, a knowledge of French is made necessary, in order that candidates educated *only* in the National Schools may not be excluded from competition.

regulations, however, as may appear calculated to facilitate such instruction and, at the same time, guard against the neglect of any of the purely elementary branches of ordinary education.

The following resolutions are, therefore, submitted for their consideration, as pointing out, should they deem it expedient to introduce such instruction, the mode by which, in accordance with the existing regulations, it may, most readily, and advantageously be effected.

I. That every teacher who, besides having such attainments as at present entitle him to be placed in any division of the First class, or in the first or second division of the Second class, shall be able to stand an examination in one of the first six books of Virgil's *Æneid*, in the sixth book of Cæsar's Commentaries, and in the first book of Xenophon's *Anæcrons*, shall receive a certificate of merit entitling him to an augmentation of salary, to the extent of 20 per cent. additional to his class salary.

II. That Classical Instruction shall be given in the Central Training Schools, and all Model Schools, to such pupil teachers as shall, at the end of one year from their admission, be certified by the Professors, District Inspectors, or Head Inspectors, to have attained their standard amount of proficiency, and who shall be desirous to extend their course of training into a second year, and to apply themselves during that year, in addition to one or more special subjects of their previous course, to the study of one or both of the ancient languages—Greek and Latin.

III. That the ordinary pupils in any Training, District, Model, or other Model School, who shall be certified by the Professors, or District Inspector, to have attained satisfactory proficiency in the course of study prescribed for senior paid monitors in their fourth year, shall, on such recommendation, be admitted to receive instruction in Classics.

IV. That in any ordinary National School, the master of

which shall hold the certificate of merit mentioned in resolution I., Classics may be taught therein, at any hour before or after the ordinary school hours, charging such rate of tuition as shall be previously approved of by the Patron, and sanctioned by the District Inspector.

V. No such master shall be allowed to teach Classics during the ordinary school hours, unless the Patron or Managers of the school shall have first provided, at his or their own expense, an assistant, approved of by the District Inspector, to assist such teacher in the ordinary business of the school—nor until such teacher shall have first exhibited to the District Inspector, for his approval and amendment, if necessary, a Time table of the school business, specifying the particular school hours in which such classical instruction shall be given—such Time table not to be altered without the previous approval, by the Inspector, of every alteration.

VI. That in case any person, not being a trained National Teacher, shall submit to be examined by the Professors, in the programme of study prescribed for the Teachers of the Special Class, during their period of training, and shall, therefore, be adjudged to be deserving—if trained—of classification in any division of the First class, and shall also pass an examination in Classics, in such manner as to entitle him—if trained—to such certificate of merit as before mentioned; such person, if nominated by any Patron to the mastership of any National School, and producing testimonials as to good character, certificate of good health and constitution, and that his age does not exceed—years, shall be admitted to the Training School for the purpose of being taught school organization and method, and after an attendance therein for a period of not less than (3) months, shall receive such classification as he may be entitled to as above, and such certificates of merit before mentioned.

The details which are embodied in these propositions, or which are incidental to their operation, are not of a

character likely to require any large addition to the grant from the State, nor in any way to interfere with existing arrangements.

It is respectfully submitted that the training of the National teachers in Ireland should not, on any sound principle, be allowed to remain in any respect inferior to that given in any Normal or Training School in England or Scotland—that the advantages enjoyed by pupils in the National Schools in Ireland, should not, in justice to this country, be in any degree less than those afforded in schools receiving State support in either of the latter.

The success which has hitherto attended the National system will be incomplete, if it refuse to supply those deficiencies which its own operations have, in a great measure, created, or to place within the reach of its teachers and pupils, any attainments or advantages which such schools elsewhere do not hesitate to hold out.

Jan. 1858.

By the Hon. Mr. St. John

and Mr. S. Cantwell

with Mr. J. B. O'Connell

35 South Street

15th Oct. 1853.