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1869.

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PRIMARY EDUCATION COMMISSION,  
(IRELAND.)

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EVIDENCE

OF THE

*Irish National Teachers' Associations*

IN REPLY TO

QUERIES ADDRESSED BY THE COMMISSIONERS TO  
VERE FOSTER, Esq., AND SUBMITTED BY HIM  
FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

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LONDON :

MARCUS WARD & CO., 67, CHANDOS STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

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PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE.





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*Eleventh Resolution of the Second Congress of Irish National Teachers, held in  
Dublin, on 29th December, 1868.*

“That Mr. Vere Foster has our sanction to publish the several replies he received from the several Associations to his circular of queries, in connexion with the Royal Commission on Primary Education in Ireland.”



## Introductory Remarks.

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HAVING been requested by the Royal Commissioners of Primary Education in Ireland, through Assistant Commissioner D. C. Richmond, to furnish information in reply to certain queries ; and being equally anxious with themselves to promote the extension and efficiency of popular education, but not conceiving myself to be a competent witness without further inquiry, I adopted the following course :—

As I had been in correspondence for many years with the Teachers of nearly every National School in Ireland on the subject of School improvements, especially with reference to buildings and apparatus, and as my publications have been for some years in use in almost every such School, I thought it likely that, through the kind co-operation of the Teachers, I might become the *medium* for obtaining much useful information for the Commissioners and for Parliament ; I, therefore, reprinted the queries of the Royal Commission, with additions of my own, and addressed them to the Secretaries of the numerous Teachers' Associations which have been recently organized in nearly every county.

As the principal objects in the appointment of the Royal Commission appeared to be to ascertain the popular feeling in favour, or otherwise, of the present system of combined secular and separate religious instruction, and to obtain suggestions as to the best means of inducing a better and more regular attendance of scholars, I directed special attention to these points, addressing copies of the queries also to all Teachers of rural schools containing a largely mixed attendance of Roman Catholic and Protestant pupils. I append the queries above referred to, and also the answers received from sixty-nine Teachers' Associations, and from thirty-seven individual Teachers, omitting, for obvious reasons, references to names or localities, and premising them by the following remarks, which are partly an epitome of the replies and partly the expression of my own opinions.

### PRIMARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (IRELAND).

*Questions addressed to MR. VERE FOSTER, by the ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.*

- 1.—Are the means for the education of the poorer classes sufficient ?
- 2.—Do the poorer classes avail themselves as much as they might of the existing means of education ? If not, is their neglect to do so due to (a) distance from school building ; (b) amount of school fees ; (c) want of confidence in the Teacher ; (d) religious and conscientious scruples ; (e) inability to forego children's wages ; (f) or any other cause that you can assign ?
- 3.—Can you suggest any plan for inducing a better and more regular attendance by the children at the schools ?



- 4.—Is the system of educating children of different denominations together beneficial or not? and what is the popular feeling on the subject?
- 5.—What is the general effect of the several industrial occupations on school attendance, and the period of school life?  
Have you any views to express concerning the operation of the Factory Regulations, as touching the employment of young children, whether boys or girls?
- 6.—Is the instruction given at the Schools usually gratuitous, or not? To what extent do you conceive that School fees can be advantageously imposed?
- 7.—Have you any information or views to offer on the subject of Night Schools?
- 8.—Do you consider the system of Inspection as carried out by the National Board sufficient for its purpose?

The above questions having been addressed to me by the Royal Commission on Primary Education in Ireland, I shall feel greatly obliged to Managers and Teachers of National Schools, especially to Secretaries of Teachers' Associations, and also to other persons interested in the promotion of popular education, who will kindly furnish me with materials for trustworthy replies, more particularly to questions Nos. 3 and 4. I should also be thankful for expressions of opinion on such other points as may appear of sufficient importance to be brought under the notice of the Commission, for instance:

- 9.—What would be the best and most practicable means of improving the position of the Teachers, and at the same time increasing the efficiency of their Schools.
- 10.—Should salaries be based on the classification of the Teachers only; on the proficiency of the scholars only; on numbers in attendance only; or on a mixture of two or all three of these elements? If it be thought desirable to base salaries on results only, that is, on the proficiency of the scholars, should the payments be calculated separately for each scholar, and for each subject, or should they be based on the aggregate proficiency of the whole school?
- 11.—Is the payment of School fees and other local contributions on the increase, or otherwise?
- 12.—Are Schools, not national, on the increase, or otherwise?

VERE FOSTER.

13, DONEGALL PLACE, BELFAST,  
September, 1868.

Query No. 1.—The schools are, as a rule, sufficiently numerous. Indeed, the Board of National Education have rather erred in the direction of too great a multiplication of Schools, especially in the province of Ulster. "In many cases a redistribution of schools would be needed, being in some places too close, and in others too far apart." (See Reply No. I.) "In many places there" is "a great waste of teaching power, from want of proper classification into infant, middle, and upper schools." (Reply II.)

Query No. 2.—No. (a) No; "except for very young children in severe weather, in country places," (Reply I.), for there is scarcely a spot now to be found in Ireland, unless on islands, highlands, and promontories, more than two miles distant from a National School. In a total population of about five millions and three quarters, there were, according to the last Report of the Commissioners, 6520 Schools attended in the course of the year 1867 by 913,198 distinct scholars, the average daily attendance for the year being 321,683. (b) In some cases, "but in the greater part of Ireland education may be said to be gratuitous to the labouring class." (Reply I.) "Indeed, it might be worthy of enquiry whether the practice of fixing very low rates of school fees, and encouraging free education is not one cause of bad attendance, for it is invariably



## Introductory Remarks.

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found that the free pupils and the worst payers are also the worst attenders." (Reply II.) (c) "This has seldom been the case, but it is becoming more frequent as efficient and experienced Teachers are leaving, and, owing to the inadequate remuneration which the Teachers receive, qualified persons cannot be induced to join the profession." (Reply I.) (e) "This causes a great number of the poorer children to leave when they are able to read the second book, and able to write a little." (Reply I.) "In rural districts children are usually kept at home during seed and harvest time to assist their parents, (Reply III.) ; or the latter, "finding their children able to earn a little money as errand boys, herding cattle, &c., withdraw them from school as soon as they can obtain employment for them." (Reply II.) (f) Downright apathy and carelessness of parents, and want of proper clothing.

Query No. 3.—An educational poll tax and a local rate in aid of the Parliamentary grant ; and, as a last resource, compulsory attendance *after the general establishment of good schools.*

What is got for nothing is usually little valued ; therefore, either school fees should be compulsory on all comers, the effect of which would be to shut out from the blessings of education those who most require the aid of the State, namely, the children of parents apathetic or indifferent to education, or a school tax should be imposed in lieu of school fees, in which case it may be expected that those who had paid the tax would take an interest in the management of the school, or in causing their own children, and inducing those of their neighbours, to attend regularly, so as to get value for their money. In practice, it is found that those scholars who pay fees in advance attend the most regularly and make the most progress. A similar result might be expected to follow the prepayment of a compulsory school tax. "The best paying pupils are also the most regular, the most punctual in attendance, the most attentive to their lessons, and the most tractable in school ; and, such being our experience, we consider *this fact* argues powerfully for a system of universal payment." (Reply VII.) I think, therefore, that an educational tax should be levied as an addition to the poor rate, each district being empowered to form local committees of management, and to raise a further tax for building and repairs of schoolhouses and Teachers' residences supplementary to grants from the State for the same purpose.

Inducements should be held out for better qualified Teachers to enter the service. (See Replies to Queries Nos. 9 and 10.)

"In all cases where paid monitors are now employed, properly qualified and well paid Assistants should be substituted, the monitorial scheme having proved a failure." (Reply III.) The consequent improvement to be expected in the efficiency of the schools will induce a better and more regular attendance. Should, however, the monitorial system be retained, there should be more discrimination in the appointment of paid Monitors, who frequently by their carelessness allow careless habits to spring up and to get so ingrained into the pupils, as to become most difficult to eradicate, it being notoriously a more difficult matter to unlearn a bad habit than to learn a good one.

"Teachers when relieved of the necessity of following various pursuits



before and after school hours should be required to make frequent visits to the homes of pupils who attend irregularly or neglect their home lessons." (Reply XXI.)

Penmanship is the best taught subject in England and the worst in Ireland, where, as a general rule, since the introduction of the National System, it has been almost utterly neglected, except in the schools of the Christian Brothers, where the writing classes are carefully superintended. As there is no subject in which progress is more visible, and therefore more appreciated by parents, and as it is of equal importance with reading and arithmetic, the apathy of parents might be removed and their interest in the schools awakened by more attention to this branch of instruction.

As a step towards rendering the schools more useful and attractive, by furnishing them with the means of obtaining all necessary appliances, depositories of school requisites should be established at every District Inspector's head quarters, so that Managers and Teachers may have opportunities of seeing and examining before ordering supplies. Fresh books and requisites are added about once every half year to the Board's list, and Teachers have no means of knowing what they are except by ordering them on chance, whereby it often happens that they expend money which they can ill afford on the purchase of articles which on inspection turn out to be unsuitable. Any articles added to the Board's stock after the publication of the list are not sold till after publication of the next half-yearly list, whereas they should, as is customary with the trade, be purchaseable at once. The absence of opportunity to inspect before ordering new articles on the list is the more inconvenient, as most Teachers get their supplies but once a year. It has hitherto been the practice of the Board to allow to Teachers a discount of twenty per cent. off the prices of the more essential school requisites for sale to the scholars, provided the total amount of the order should be at least twenty-five shillings, in the expectation that the amount of the discount would be applied to the purchase of such articles as are not saleable to the pupils but form part of the permanent furniture of the school room, as clocks, maps, blackboards, diagrams, &c. This expectation has been disappointed. The Board's object would be better insured by giving the Teachers the right to make a *selection of such articles* to the amount of the discount, rather than by giving them the right to reduce their payments by such amount.\*

\* "As regards the apparatus, most of that now in use in the schools was supplied some years ago as free grants by the Commissioners, and by Mr. Vere Foster. This apparatus is now beginning to be very much the worse for wear, and for damp, particularly the maps, the most useful of which have in several schools become faded and torn, and hardly fit to be employed in the instruction of the classes; and as these free grants have been discontinued, and as the Managers are seldom disposed, and the Teachers can seldom afford, to purchase maps at their own expense, I have no doubt that the state of our schools, generally, in respect of apparatus, will become less and less satisfactory from year to year, and that at last the Commissioners will find themselves compelled, in the interests of the schools, to resume, at least in a modified shape, their old system of free grants of apparatus.

"In the great majority of schools the duty of keeping up a stock of lesson books, copy books, and other requisites for sale to the pupils, has to be discharged by the Teachers alone, and in a great many instances, as it appears, is discharged unsatisfactorily. . . . I feel convinced that in every district a large proportion of the schools will be found inadequately supplied, until increased facilities for



For many years past the book department of the National Board has been grossly mismanaged. Managers and Teachers have in innumerable instances either been kept waiting from one to six months or more for the execution of their orders, or else have been supplied with articles which they did not require, in substitution for others which they had paid for and which were urgently needed.\*

Fresh supplies should be ordered from contractors in good time. There should be free competition between publishers and makers of educational books and appliances. All books and other requisites which are very popular, or which the Board would consider deserving of popularity, should be placed on their list, and Teachers should be enabled to obtain from the Board's depository, at reduced prices, any other unobjectionable school books or requisites which they may prefer, though not enumerated on such list. As the Board has practically assumed a monopoly of educational supplies to their schools, to the great injury of the trade, thus rendering the establishment of booksellers' and school stationery shops in country towns and villages a profitless speculation, they should justify that monopoly by allowing freedom of choice and by expeditious execution of orders. The department should be thoroughly reformed and reorganized on a *business footing*; more hands if necessary should be employed, or the hours of attendance lengthened and fixed as in other places of business, from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., or from 7 to 7, or else the department should be abolished and the schools supplied through the trade. Stationers and booksellers usually execute orders on the day of their receipt, and there is no sufficient reason why a Government department should not be equally expeditious, seeing that it has practically unlimited funds at its disposal for the employment of additional hands if required.

The Board should avail itself of the columns of the *Irish Teachers' Journal* as an expeditious and inexpensive medium for informing Teachers of additions to their stock, new regulations, &c. This Journal is published monthly, and is read by nearly every National Teacher.

Comfortable schoolhouses should be provided at the joint expense of the State and of local taxation, in place of the cold, damp, thatched hovels for which the Teachers pay rent in many counties, more especially

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purchasing school requisites shall have been provided by the Commissioners. Under the present arrangement, according to which all requisites must be obtained from the central department in Dublin, it very frequently happens that when a Teacher's sale-stock of First Books, or copy books, or slates, runs out before the rest of his stock has been disposed of, the deficiency cannot be supplied for a considerable time; whereas, if the Commissioners had an agent in every large town for the sale of such requisites as are in constant demand in National Schools, a Teacher who required a dozen copy books, or half a dozen Third Books, or any small quantity of requisites, could purchase them at once without much trouble. Such an arrangement would be a great relief to Teachers; would confer a signal benefit upon the schools; would save the Commissioners the expense (which must be very considerable) of forwarding parcels to the provinces; and would relieve the central department of a vast amount of laborious duty, which cannot always be discharged with the expected punctuality."—*Report of J. E. Sheridan, Head Inspector, 1867.*

\* "It is not of delay only that the Teachers complain, but that the *third* of requisites applied for are not sent, but other kinds not needed in the school are often sent in their stead."—*Report of J. Morell, District Inspector, 1867.*



in Sligo, Mayo, Leitrim, Fermanagh, Cavan, and Tyrone. Meanwhile, plans of cheap and superior schoolhouses should be distributed by the Board to all Managers of National Schools.\* If I can be furnished by the Commissioners or their Inspectors, or by Managers, Teachers, or other persons, with such plans as will meet my own approval, I shall be happy to publish them at my own expense, and furnish copies gratis to every Manager of a National School, and will contribute a considerable sum, as hitherto, towards the expense of erecting suitable school buildings in all poor rural districts in every county.

Query No. 4.—Beneficial, and the success of the system is sufficient evidence of its popularity. The efforts of Parliament to provide for the education of children of different denominations in the same schools have been *remarkably* successful, as is proved by the fact that out of 175,478 Protestant children attending National Schools in 1867, 155,343, or 88.5 per cent., were in attendance in Mixed Schools, there being 3821 such schools.

I have appended in full all the replies which I have received from Associations and from Teachers of Schools having a largely mixed attendance of R. Catholic and Protestant pupils, being especially careful to publish all remarks contrary to, as well as those in favor of my own views, so as not to be liable to a charge of partiality. A very few Associations and Teachers have expressed themselves in favor of the Denominational System; the greater number strongly approve of the Mixed System; while the remainder have courteously declined to answer this question, even though I promised that the replies should be published anonymously. The popular feeling, where not totally indifferent on the subject, which is generally the case—the people taking no part in the controversy on this vexed question—appears as a general rule to be in favor of the present Mixed System, which is generally acknowledged to have been administered by the Board with the utmost impartiality. Active opposition to it is confined to clergymen, members of Parliament, landlords, and others who have no occasion to use the common schools. The feeling of the clergy of every denomination is in favor of gathering the children of their own flocks into separate schools, and this is fairly practicable in towns: for instance, in Belfast, where I reside, and which contains 150,000 inhabitants, of whom more than one-third are R. Catholics, another third Presbyterians, and one-fourth members of the Established Church,—containing, therefore, a more largely mixed religious population than that of any other town of its size in the United Kingdom,—there are upwards of one hundred National Schools, nearly all of which are, and always have been, denominational, in the sense of being attended by R. Catholic pupils only or Protestant pupils only. Some members of Parliament and others have attributed the frequency of riots in Belfast in

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\* “It would, I believe, be a great boon to the public were the Commissioners to select, with the assistance of an experienced architect and their own Inspectors, suitable, and, as far as practicable cheap, plans for building and furnishing schoolhouses to accommodate 50, 70, and 100 pupils. With thrifty management, and help from farmers and others in providing stones and lime, it is surprising how much can be done for a few pounds. I know that plain but commodious school-houses have, by such means, been built and supplied with the necessary furniture for £60, and even less.”—*Report of J. G. Fleming, Head Inspector, 1867.*



part to the Mixed System, but I think it may rather in fairness be partly traced to the prevalent system of educating the children of different denominations in separate schools. It is not so practicable to maintain separate schools for each denomination in rural districts, and accordingly it is found that, in the County Tyrone, which is one of the most purely agricultural counties in Ireland, and whose population is more mixed in regard to religious denominations than that of any other county, more than two-thirds of the schools are mixed. In that county, and in the rest of the Province of Ulster, there were, according to the last enumeration taken in 1859 (see Parliamentary Return, No. 105, 1861, Mr. Butt's), 914 schools, out of a total of 1894, in which the pupils of the denomination which was in the minority amounted to from 10 to 49 per cent. of the whole attendance. There were at that time 2898 Mixed Schools in all Ireland, which have since been increased to 3821, or three-fifths of the total number, thus proving the increasing popularity of the system, notwithstanding the violent opposition of the advocates of denominationalism from opposite quarters.

The Commissioners of National Education have, in deference to the wishes of clergymen, already allowed too great a multiplication of schools throughout these counties, and by the establishment of so many very small schools have greatly injured the cause of education. If the Denominational System should be substituted by Act of Parliament for the present Mixed System, small inefficient schools will be still further multiplied and party spirit encouraged, or the children of the minority in numerous cases will be without the means of education, or will be permitted to partake of secular instruction only on condition of taking part in religious exercises, and receiving religious instruction of which their parents totally disapprove, as is the case with the Roman Catholics and other dissenters in England, and in a less degree in the United States of America.

I trust that the foundation principle of the Irish National System of Education, *combined secular and separate religious* instruction, will be maintained in its integrity, as laid down by the Earl of Derby, when Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the following words :

“They [the Board] will require that the schools be kept open for a certain number of hours on four or five days of the week, at the discretion of the Commissioners, for moral and literary education only, and that the remaining one or two days in the week be set apart for giving separately such religious instruction to the children as may be approved of by the clergy of their respective persuasions.”

*The present rule permitting the interpolation of religious instruction in the midst of the ordinary hours of secular instruction should be abolished as soon as possible, or it may act as a wedge to split the National System.*

Query No. 5.—“The children of farmers, as a general rule, continue longest at school, though at certain seasons, during seed time and harvest, they are usually kept at home to assist their parents ; those of tradesmen are more regular in attendance but are generally withdrawn earlier ; while laborers are, from their poverty, compelled to send their children to business as soon as their services are of any value.” (Reply III.)

Query No. 6.—It is next to gratuitous. I think that, if a school tax



should be imposed, school fees might advantageously be totally abolished. The Board's recent rule regulating the amount of salary by the average attendance of scholars "acts very materially to lessen the amount of fees. The Teacher, finding that his salary will be reduced if the attendance falls below a certain average, is obliged to admit the pupils at very low rates, or even without fees, in order to keep up the required number of pupils. This rule, and the injudicious distribution of schools in some localities, are the principal causes why school fees are not keeping pace with the extension of education." (Reply I.) "Scholars are often withdrawn when payments are pressed. Teachers think it better in such cases to secure the State grant and forego school fees." (Reply VIII.) The Commissioners "by multiplying to an unlimited extent the number of schools, at the same time making the Teacher's salary in each case depend upon his average attendance, have put it out of the Teacher's power to impose school fees," (Reply XVI.), as, "in many cases, to induce the absence or risk the loss of a pupil by insisting on school fees would be something suicidal." (Reply XIX.)

Query No 7.—There is very little experience of Night Schools in Ireland. It appears from the Commissioners' Report for 1867 that there were only 165 in the entire country, 115 of which were in the three counties of Antrim, Down, and Armagh.

Query No. 8.—Fairly efficient, but of course not *sufficient*, as perfection has not yet been attained. "The Inspectors might," with advantage, "devote more of their time to the examination of the children, and less to the school statistics," and "should rather point out what the Teacher ought to do than find fault with what is done. This would be particularly useful to young Teachers." (Reply I.)

Query No. 9.—"The salaries should be considerably increased, in order to induce young persons to prepare themselves for the office of Teacher, as well as to encourage efficient Teachers to remain in the service. In consequence of the present low rate of salaries, a large proportion of the men employed as Teachers are totally unfit for the office." (Reply XVI.) It would not, I conceive, be extravagant to expect that the salaries should be put on a level with those given in England, that is, the average should be raised at least one hundred per cent. ; such increased payment to be made subject to the conditions specified in reply to the next query, No. 10. At present, the pittance given to Teachers are so miserably inadequate that their ranks are being continually thinned of their most promising members, who embrace other more lucrative avocations, or seek their fortunes in distant lands. The average emoluments from all sources, of Principal Teachers for the year 1867, excluding Prison, Workhouse, Lunatic Asylum, and Convent Schools, and including good service pay and all kinds of premiums and gratuities, was £35, of which 84 per cent. was provided by the State, 12½ per cent. from school fees, and only 3½ per cent. from other local contributions. The corresponding emoluments of certificated Teachers, *Principals and Assistants*, in England for the same year were, for Male Teachers £88 18s. 5d., and for Female Teachers, £54 10s., of which rather less than one-third was provided by the State, rather less than

x males £35 females £28.10.0



another third from school fees, and the rest from other sources. If the pay in Ireland were better, higher qualifications and better results could be commanded.

“Liberal retiring pensions should be provided for Teachers incapacitated by old age or infirmity.” (Reply XXII.) It is a serious injury to the community to retain at the head of the public schools Teachers, who, on account of old age or infirmity, are unable any longer to perform satisfactorily the duties of their office, yet it would be an act of heartless cruelty to compel the resignation of meritorious Teachers worn out in the public service without making suitable provision for their support in old age. Payments by the State might with advantage be regulated on the same principle as similar payments to other civil servants who derive their salaries *entirely* from the State, but might be made conditional on the local contribution of a further amount, the district committee having the power to increase the amount of the local rate for that purpose.

Teachers’ residences should be attached where practicable to every public schoolhouse, provided rent-free to the Teachers, partly at the expense of the State, conditional on the contribution of a further amount by local taxation or otherwise.

There should be some check on the Managers’ irresponsible power of peremptory dismissal. Should an educational tax be imposed, there will of course be managing committees, in which case it may be assumed that Teachers will obtain the protection of a judicial investigation if desired by themselves. The power of Managers in this respect is, as a general rule, fairly exercised, but in some cases protection is necessary and should be obtainable.

Query No. 10.—Salaries should, in my opinion, be based on a combination of all these three elements, say four-fifths, as in the colony of Victoria in Australia, according to classification, there being three grades of Male and the same of Female Teachers; and one-fifth according to the aggregate proficiency of the whole school, there being three grades of proficiency, with extra allowances for pupils over a certain average number, and for length of service. Assistant Teachers to be paid class salary only, gratuities in every form to cease, and school fees to be abolished. “The general proficiency” of all classes in the more elementary subjects “being satisfactory, a system of positive supplementary payment upon results might be advantageously adopted with regard to instruction in extra branches, such as drawing, music, mathematics, physical science, and languages.” (Reply II.) The payments on account of the classification of the Teacher and the proficiency of the school should be subject to modification, according to a most thoughtful and well considered plan already in the hands of the Royal Commission, and emanating from a gentleman of much administrative educational experience, W. H. Newell, Esq., it being understood that, in order to retain efficient Teachers in the service, and to obtain others, the salaries, provided conjointly by Parliamentary grant and local rate, shall be raised to a level with those current for similar classification and proficiency in England.

As I am particularly anxious, on behalf of the Teachers themselves, that their own views on this, to them, most important subject should



come as fully as possible under notice, I will abstain from any further remarks, lest I should to any extent defeat my purpose in endeavouring to obtain a hearing for them.

Query No. 11.—School fees appear to be generally on the decrease, owing to the Board's recent order, regulating salaries by the average attendance. The total amount of school fees for the year 1867 was £40,883 14s. 5d. This sum divided among 6390 schools, excluding Workhouse, Prison, and Lunatic Asylum schools, gives an average of £6 7s. 11d. for each school, and if divided among 311,542 scholars in average attendance, gives an average of 2s. 7½d. for each scholar. Other local contributions (subscriptions, &c.,) which have always been very trifling in amount, appear to be on the decrease. The total amount for the year 1867 was £11,986 2s. 4d. This sum divided amongst 6390 schools gives an average of £1 17s. 6d. for each school, or 9d. for each scholar. In most counties, on the estates of even many of the wealthiest noblemen, local contributions in aid of school fees are unknown.

Query No. 12.—Schools *not National* are fast disappearing in every school district.

There should, wherever practicable, be a proper gradation of schools. At present, as a general rule, every Teacher instructs scholars of all ages, whereas, if each Teacher could have an average attendance of from forty to sixty scholars of about the same age and classification, better organization and more speedy progress could be insured. In towns, under a municipal system and lay management, and in villages, proper gradation is most practicable, but more difficult in rural districts. Towns should be mapped out into school districts or wards, and large school-houses should be erected in each ward, with numerous separate departments for infant or primary scholars, and for other pupils of various ages and classifications.

The National Board of twenty Commissioners, appointed solely on account of their personal respectability, and of their being prominent members of the various prevailing religious denominations, should be dissolved as speedily as possible, and should be replaced by one paid Commissioner, appointed solely on account of his capacity, without reference to his creed. It has been suggested that there should be three paid Commissioners—R. Catholic, Established Church, and Presbyterian. If this suggestion should unfortunately be carried out, it may be expected that the three would act as advocates, each contending for the interests of his own sect, and there would be most unseemly disputes and little progress, whereas, a single Commissioner of *educational* experience, unhampered by a Board of peers, lawyers, and clergymen, meeting only once a week or once a fortnight, would be more likely to act in a thorough spirit of impartiality and singleness of purpose, such as have been uniformly displayed for the last quarter of a century, by the present much esteemed Resident Commissioner, the Right Honourable Alexander Macdonnell, and progress would be made.

VERE FOSTER.

BELFAST, *April*, 1869.



## Replies from Teachers' Associations.

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### No. I.

1.—We think the means are almost sufficient, except in some of the crowded parts of the large towns, and in remote country districts. In many cases a redistribution of schools would be needed, being in some places too close, and in others too far apart. Many of the school rooms are unsuited, having damp earthen floors; others placed under houses of worship, with low ceilings, and bad light. The supply of furniture, maps, &c., is too frequently deficient. Generally there is no fund for the supply of these, or for the repairs of the house, and consequently all these expenses fall upon the teacher, whose income cannot afford this outlay. This charge upon the Teacher has been considerably increased since the withdrawal of the triennial free stock, which supplied maps, diagrams, &c.

2.—They do not.

(a.)—The distance is no obstacle, except for very young children in severe weather in country places.

(b.)—The payment of fees keeps some from school; but, in the greater part of Ireland, Education may be said to be almost gratuitous to the labouring class.

(c.)—This has seldom been the case, but it is becoming more frequent, as efficient and experienced teachers are leaving; and, owing to the inadequate remuneration which the teachers receive, qualified persons cannot be induced to join the profession.

(d.)—We do not know of any.

(e.)—This causes a great number of the poorer children to leave when they are able to read the Second Book, and able to write a little. The parents, finding their children able to earn a little money as errand boys, or herding cattle in rural districts, &c., withdraw them from the school as soon as they can procure employment for them.

(f.)—Poverty and indifference of parents to the benefits which Education confers upon their children.

3.—We would beg to suggest that a minimum rate of fees be struck for children attending National Schools, and that the parents



be compelled to pay these fees during the school-going age, whether the children are in attendance or not, except it can be shown that the children are receiving instruction at home. Also, that no child under 16 years of age, unable to read and write, be apprenticed to any trade or profession, or allowed to engage as a farm labourer.

4.—*As teachers of the mixed system, we do not think we should be expected to reply to this question.*

5.—There is little manufacturing industry in Ireland, but, so far as we have witnessed its operation, it tends to shorten the period of school-life. The early employment of children in the lighter kinds of agricultural labour, shortens the period of school attendance; it also makes the attendance very irregular, since the children are withdrawn during the busy periods.

6.—It is, to a great extent, gratuitous. We think that school fees should be fixed at the same rate for all Ireland, on the same principle as the Board's Model Schools, and that no child should be exempt from the payment of them—the Poor Law Guardians paying for those who are unable to pay the lowest rates. School fees might be imposed to a much greater extent than they are, if the Patrons and School Committees were to assist the Teachers by their influence in establishing a higher rate of fees, and insisting on their being punctually paid in advance. Managers generally take no interest in the matter, and in perhaps half the number of schools their action is almost to discourage the payment of fees.

The Commissioners are, to a great extent, responsible for the present low rates of fees, having in many places given grants to new schools when there was sufficient school accommodation already, the effect being to produce an unhealthy competition among the Teachers, and it has become a common practice that when the Teacher asks his quarter's fees, the children are withdrawn and sent to another school. We think the Commissioners should not have given a grant when there was sufficient school accommodation already, and that they should have insisted, as a condition of the grant being given, that the locality should be obliged to contribute a certain rate per pupil for the maintenance of the Teacher.

The "Rule of Averages" acts very materially to lessen the amount of fees. The Teacher, finding that his salary will be reduced if the attendance falls below a certain average, is necessitated to admit the pupils at very low rates, or even without fees, in order to keep up the required number of pupils. This rule, and the injudicious distribution of schools in some localities, are the principal causes why school fees are not keeping pace with the extension of education.

7.—We do not see that the state of Education has been much advanced by Night Schools, except where there is some person in the neighbourhood who has some control over the young people, as in the case of large employers of labour.



8.—The system of inspection, as carried on at present, is very efficient, but we think the Inspectors might devote more of their time to the examination of the school (children), and less to the school statistics. We also think two examinations in the year quite enough, and the Inspector might devote the time thus gained to incidental visits. He should rather point out what the Teacher ought to do, than find fault with what is done. This would be particularly useful to young Teachers. The Teachers complain that the Commissioners have given the Inspectors an almost absolute power over them. He can report the Teacher for misconduct or neglect of duty, and have him fined, or even depressed in his classification, without the Teacher even knowing that he was in fault—the Inspector acting in these cases as plaintiff and witness. His recommendations being generally followed, he may be said to act as judge also, while the Teacher is never asked to state his case. The Patron, if he be energetic, may compel the Commissioners to reconsider the charge brought against the Teacher, but seldom with any prospect of success, as those who have given a decision do not like to admit they were wrong by reversing it. We think the Teacher should not be depressed in his literary status, because he may happen to disagree with his Inspector. If it be necessary to punish him, let him be fined. We would, however, wish it to be understood, that we consider the Inspectors a gentlemanly class of men, who sympathise strongly with the Teacher. We would beg to suggest that, in case of a dispute arising between the Inspector and Teacher, both sides be heard. Even in the case of the private soldier, he is never punished without having an opportunity of showing the falsity of the charge brought against him. When too much power is placed in the hands of any class of men, it will often be abused.

9.—The Teachers will not be respected by the people until they have the means of maintaining a respectable position in society, for which their present miserable salary is totally inadequate. While mechanics can earn from 20s. to 30s. per week, and the Teacher only 13s., is it any wonder the uneducated do not respect them? In the present age, it is wealth that is respected by the greater number of people—not intellectual ability or mental culture. We would suggest that none be admitted to the office of Teacher that have not served a sufficient time to teaching, under a properly qualified person. The system of admitting unqualified persons to the position of teacher, brings disgrace on the whole profession. In no other trade or profession are persons allowed to enter it without having served a time to a properly qualified instructor. Those who have failed in other pursuits, very often take to teaching as a last resource. Being unsuited for any other business, should not be considered a qualification for teaching. The teachers would gladly put an end to this, but they have no power. Retiring pensions should be given in order to encourage persons of ability and ex-



perience to remain. Unless this is done, it cannot be expected that Teachers will remain in a service which makes no provision for old age.

10.—We think the present system of payment, as far as principle is concerned, a very good one, viz.—payment from the state on classification, and the payment of fees by the pupils, which is in reality payment for results, as it is upon the Teachers' success the attendance, and consequently the amount of fees, in a great measure depends. The "Result System," as at present carried out in England, must hinder the advancement of Education, as the Teacher would direct his efforts to the most promising pupils, and neglect the more stupid portion who most need his attention. Again, if the Inspector's visits would be immediately after vacation, or on a severe day, or at any other time when there would be a small attendance, it would cause a considerable diminution in the Teacher's payment. If salary must be based upon results, it would be less objectionable to take in the aggregate proficiency of the whole school, as the Teacher would then, as now, direct his efforts equally to all his pupils. To base the salary on attendance only would be most unjust to the Teacher, as, in many places, from various causes, the attendance cannot be made large. Besides, the Teacher who has 30 pupils must work as hard as the Teacher who has 50; for the 30 will keep him as busy as he can be, while the Teacher who has 50 will have a monitor or two to assist him, so that in fact he may have easier work. But it may be said that, it is not working harder, but the having a better system of communicating instruction, which insures a larger attendance. This is true, and the present mode of payment brings it very properly into the foreground. The examination of the Teacher to test his literary abilities, and his fitness to communicate instruction, by competent persons, is the proper means of knowing whether the Teachers are fit for their duties or not. We all know the pupils are not competent to decide this point; and the parents, even if competent, have not the opportunity. We then hold to the opinion, that the present mode of payment is correct in principle—payment for class and payment of fees (as payment for Results), supplemented by local endowments in poor districts.

11.—We think the payment from fees and local rates is rather on the decrease.

12.—Schools not National are, if anything, on the decrease. We would beg to protest against private individuals being allowed to open schools without having a certificate of competency from some proper authority.

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## No. II.

1.—The means—understanding by this term schools—for the education of the poorer classes, are generally considered sufficient in this part of the country. In many places there are too many schools, and a great waste of teaching power, from want of a proper classification into Infant, Middle, and Upper Schools. In almost every ordinary school are to be found children ranging from 4 to 14 or 15 years' old; and it is surely a disadvantage to have a first-class Teacher wasting his energies over the elements of reading, &c., while his more advanced pupils are languishing in their studies from want of proper attention.

2.—The poorer classes do not avail themselves as much as they might of the existing means of Education. Their neglect to do so may, in some instances, arise from inability to provide necessary food and clothes; but, in our opinion, it chiefly arises from want of a proper sense of duty, and of the value of Education—that is, where it is in their power to obtain it.

(*a. b.*)—We have already stated that, in general, schools are sufficiently numerous and within convenient distance, and the non-attendance cannot be attributed to the amount of school fees; for, unfortunately for the Teacher, where there is an unwillingness on the part of parents to pay for the education of their children, even where they possess ample means, most school-managers discountenance and forbid any resort to measures of compulsion. Indeed, it might be worthy of inquiry, whether the practice of fixing very low rates of school fees, and encouraging free education, is not one cause of bad attendance; for it is invariably found that the free pupils, and the worst payers, are always the worst attenders.

(*c. d.*)—There are, we fear, too many instances where parents think that their children might as well be staying at home for all the good they get, and where the best reason that can be urged for sending them to school is, that they will be out of the way of mischief; for there are too many schools where either the Patron does not care for having a properly qualified Master, or where the emoluments are so contemptible as to preclude the bare supposition of any person at all fit to be a Teacher accepting the situation. But, as to religious and conscientious scruples, we cannot too strongly express our belief that, as far as the National Schools are concerned, no such feelings exist. Wherever the people understood the Commissioners' Rules upon Religious Instruction, they think them perfectly fair and satisfactory, and, if left to themselves, would send their children to the nearest, or best, National School with unhesitating will and perfect confidence. When interfered with, as they too often are, it very often happens that, when they cannot get sending their children to the school of their choice, they send them to no school at all.



(e.)—There is very little demand for children's labour in this neighbourhood, but, from the indifference manifested by some parents about the education of their children, we are strongly inclined to believe that the offer of a few pence per day would afford a sufficient inducement to them for entirely withdrawing from school pupils that could find employment.

3.—Towards promoting a better and more regular attendance at school the clergy might do much, if, laying aside narrow sectarian views, and acting upon broad philanthropic principles, they instructed the poorer classes in the duty of procuring for their children a sound Secular Education, and encouraged them in a generous rivalry with their fellow-christians of other churches in the grand march of progress and enlightenment. They should point out to them the facilities of the present day for bettering their condition by means of Education, and the impossibility of rising in the world without it. The gentry might also do much by taking a greater interest in the schools of their neighbourhood than they seem to evince. At present, where any portion of the gentry take an interest in a school, it seems to culminate in the giving of a school feast, or the distribution of clothing to the poorer pupils, practices which are of very doubtful utility. But they ought to exhibit a real interest in the education, the progress, of the pupils. If children of talent and ability were noticed and encouraged, it might be attended with the happiest effects. Doubtless much might also be done to promote a better attendance by employing better masters, and thus improving schools where the instruction is worthless or defective; but, as an immediate remedy for the evil, we desire to state that, considering the circumstances of this country, and the prospects that lie before us, we have most confidence in some legislative enactment on the subject.

4.—*The system of educating together children of different religious denominations, is, in every instance in which it is permitted to be carried out, productive of the most beneficial effects. The experience of every National Teacher who has been placed in circumstances favourable for observation supplies abundant proofs of the blessed effects which would follow from the adoption of an enlightened and comprehensive scheme of United Education. Unhappily for the interests of Irish Society, the National System has never been honestly adopted, and efficiently carried out in spirit and intention, in this country; and yet the popular feeling is entirely in favour of such a system. Of this no class of men have a better opportunity of judging than the National Teachers, and they can solemnly avouch its truth. Not only do the people approve of United Education, but they deplore the miscarriage of the National System, and attribute that miscarriage to the vacillation of the Commissioners, and the half measures of the Government. They allege that no religious instruction of any kind should ever have been admitted into the schools, or, at least, that no State-paid Teacher should have been allowed to take part in it. They also condemn the invidious distinction implied in appointing clerical managers to schools. In short, we believe that the popular voice is for a purely*



*Secular System of United State Education, leaving religious training in the hands of the parents and the clergy.*

5.—We have no observations to make upon the effects of the industrial occupations on school attendance, except as regards agriculture. Upon this head we have to remark that farmers often very needlessly keep their children from school during the periods of field labour, very much to the detriment of their school progress.

6.—The instruction given at the schools is not usually gratuitous. There are, indeed, a considerable number of free scholars, but, in general, the parents pay, or at least stipulate to pay, more or less. In too many cases, however, it is only a stipulation.

We are of opinion that, in most parts of the country, much more could be raised by school fees than at present. People who are able enough to pay for other commodities somehow or other are very unwilling to pay anything beyond a mere trifle for education, particularly at National Schools. Now, such people ought to be compelled to pay; but this under the present system is impossible. In this country, we do not think it would be too much to require that school fees, or local aid of some sort, to the amount of, at least, half the Government grant, be guaranteed to the teacher; in other words, that one-third of the teacher's salary be derived from the school.

7.—Our experience does not encourage us to hope for much good from Night Schools. A few well-disposed lads might, to be sure, benefit by them; but, in general, nothing can ever make up for the loss of the education which should have been obtained at an efficient and well-conducted Day School. Wherever Night Schools are established, there should be special teachers for them. The labour of conducting a well-taught Day School is quite enough for men of ordinary constitutions.

8.—The system of inspection carried out by the Board is more specious and elaborate than productive of the objects for which it was designed. There is too great a tendency in official positions to represent the functions of the Inspector as the very pith and marrow of the National System of Education. To this end a systematic and sustained effort has been making for a series of years to construct and establish in this country a fabric of what may be termed Inspector craft. It would be easy to adduce proofs enough of this very natural proceeding.

It has been observed, however, by able and experienced Teachers that their schools are very little the better of the periodical visits of the Inspectors. Indeed, it may be asserted that, as some of these gentlemen have their hobbies, and make their reports from the saddle, the Teacher being obliged to chime in with their peculiarities, very often they prove a positive hinderance, rather than a help, to the general progress of the schools. But they make the returns to the Board, and they watch and report faithless and incompetent teachers. Just so; but it might be proper to inquire whether the



necessary information could not be obtained by fewer Inspectors in fewer visits, and whether it would not be a better, as well as a more economical, arrangement, to have less inspection, and a better qualified and more trust-worthy class of Teachers. One never hears any imputation cast upon the watchfulness and efficiency of the inspection staff, and yet it is acknowledged that in general the schools are not what they ought to be. It is plain, therefore, that inspection cannot make good schools. This can be accomplished only by thoroughly qualified Teachers, who have their hearts in the work, and with such men very little inspection is necessary. Any attempt to assimilate the mode of carrying out the details of an educational system to that of a military or a police system, must end in failure.

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The chief means of improving the position of the Teachers, would be to give them a good salary. It may be laid down as an axiom, that, without ample remuneration, an adequate class of men will never be found willing to undertake the irksome and laborious task of educating the young; and, without competent teachers, there will never be efficient schools. No inspection, however vigilant and ingenious,—no forcing process of Junior Monitors, Senior Monitors, first-class Monitors and Pupil Teachers, will ever keep the educational machinery of the schools in effective condition, without sweetening with the oil of liberal wages. The experiment has been tried, and the failure is conspicuous: and now there is nothing for it but to offer such liberal terms as will induce respectable and well-qualified men to enter the service from various quarters.

Having a respectable salary to offer, let no one but a properly-qualified person be appointed to a school—a trained Teacher, or, at least, one who has passed a Board of Examiners and obtained a certificate. Under the present administration of our schools, the most ignorant young person may be appointed as a Teacher, and in reality such is too often the case; for, unfortunately, there are School-managers who think that very meagre acquirements are sufficient for a primary Teacher. Well, such a person, after worse than wasting the time of his pupils for months, may eventually have to be removed; but even if, by dint of driving on the part of the Inspector, and of torture to himself and his pupils, he after all obtain a class, what is his value to the country as an educator? Such tampering with the interests of Education ought to be promptly rescinded. Let the Board keep a depôt of trained Teachers, or a register of certificated Teachers, and let none but such be appointed to the charge of schools. Managers on making application could be thus readily supplied with Teachers for their schools according to religion, class, &c., and obtain removals and replacements when desirable. This system, besides acting as a check upon the appointment of incompetent persons, would have the effect of placing



some limitation to the irresponsible power of appointing and dismissing, which Managers now possess, and which is sometimes exercised in the most tyrannical and unjust manner.

This insecurity of position is regarded as a very great grievance by Teachers, and must necessarily, in more ways than one, act prejudicially upon the tone and progress of Education. In the first place, an educated person with proper notions of self-respect, looking at the Board's Rules on the subject, and knowing the tone adopted by many Managers towards Teachers, would be very slow to place himself in the humiliating position of Teacher. But, suppose that, by some misfortune or other, he has been obliged to place himself in it, and that, by maintaining the demeanour which every true Schoolmaster ought to maintain, he makes himself distasteful to a Manager, who wants only a very humble, in fact, a servile person,—what then? Or suppose he wishes to carry out in his school an enlightened and thorough course of instruction, and that the Manager pooh-poohs it, and orders him to keep within a certain track,—what then? Why, of course, in these, as in a hundred other contingencies, he must either do violence to his conscience, his convictions, and all his ideas of what is due to himself and to his scholars, or he is dismissed. What, therefore, must be the effect of such conditions upon general improvement in education?

If the Commissioners of National Education really wish to secure the services of Teachers such as they describe in their own Rules, they should learn to treat them in all official relations as men of sensibility and honour. They should set an example to Managers by the consideration and respect manifest in all their dealings with them. But, instead of this, some of their Rules are standing brands of degradation upon the Teacher, and their printed directions to Managers in matters relating to Teachers, are rather calculated to excite contempt. Now, men worthy to be entrusted with the duty of educating the youth of the country ought not to be subjected to this treatment. If it is thought necessary for the sake of keeping up due subordination, it would be almost better to have no National Education. In our opinion, it is entirely unnecessary, and instead of being beneficial, is productive of much discontent and unhappiness.

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**SCHOOL FEES.**—The payment of school fees is generally on the increase, and is capable of still further development as a source of income to the Teachers. Numerous instances could be pointed out where schools, which had been very unproductive, upon being put in charge of able teachers, who looked sharply after the fees, came to triple and quadruple the amount formerly realized in that way. In any attempt to impose an increased tariff of school fees, of course the concurrence of the Managers will be necessary, and, therefore, the Government should make it conditional of the continuation of



the grant to any school, that a sum equal to at least one-half that grant, or one-third of the total income of the Teacher, should be raised in school fees, or other local aid. This we think, in all fairness, might be demanded from the country. It should be also required in each case that a comfortable dwelling, free of rent, be provided for the use of the Teacher.

Other local contributions, such as subscriptions from landlords, proceeds of sermons, &c., are on the *decrease* in this neighbourhood. When a school is placed in connexion with the Board, it is made a pretext for withdrawing such assistance. We could name great landlords who have withdrawn the five or ten pounds a year which they used to pay to the schools upon their estates, as soon as they got them put under the Board, the Agents alleging that the Teachers were paid pretty well by the State. In this part of the country, numerous schools which had been in connexion with other societies, have, within the last few years, been put into connection with the National Board, so that schools not national are on the decrease.

The National Teachers of Ireland, feeling that they are a wretchedly paid class of public servants, are earnestly working to have their incomes raised to a standard commensurate with the value of their services. One of the objects of the present agitation is, to procure a large increase of salary, and if that be accomplished, it matters little to them whether it occurs through the medium of payment by results, by capitation, or by classification. But, basing our arguments upon sound principle, and the interests of the education of the people, we have concluded to pronounce emphatically in behalf of graduating the salaries of the Teachers, according to classification and the efficiency of their schools. The results of teaching may thus be made an element in determining the amount of salary. For, let a certain scale of proficiency be adopted, and rigidly insisted upon,—promote in class no Teacher whose school will not warrant it,—withhold a portion of his salary from the Teacher whose school is not up to the mark. As far as the ordinary school instruction (reading, writing, arithmetic,) is concerned, let the payment of the Teacher's salary depend negatively upon the result of his teaching—that is, if a certain scale of progress and proficiency has not been attained, let a portion of his salary be withheld.

The general proficiency of his school being satisfactory, a system of positive supplementary payment upon results might be advantageously adopted with regard to instruction in extra branches, such as drawing, music, mathematics, physical science, and languages. But to adopt the method of payment by results in its entirety, as practised in England, would be destructive of the dearest interests of education in this country. That system may find favour with a few Inspectors, as it would make their office more necessary, and throw more power over the Teachers into their hands, but able and conscientious men will withhold their sanction as they



prize the advantages of true intellectual and moral cultivation.

Payment based upon attendance, except so far as it might act in making it necessary for the highest classed Teachers to be put in charge of the most important schools, would be very unsuitable to the circumstances of this country. Its effects, in many cases, would be to make the worst Teacher the best paid; for there are Managers with large schools under them who prefer Teachers that will not be turning the heads of the lower classes by conducting their schools agreeably to the views of the maudlin educationists of the present day, but who will keep to the good old plan of teaching them to be able to read their Bibles, or con their catechisms, with, perhaps, a little writing and ciphering besides. The utmost extent to which attendance should be allowed to enter as an element into the calculation of the Teacher's salary, ought to be as a negative limitation—that is, particular schools with a particular minimum attendance, should be entitled to the services of only a 3rd class Teacher, certain other schools to a 2nd class Teacher, and others to a 1st. Such a rule as this is already in operation under the Board, and it has been the source of some great hardships, and much discontent. Better to have fewer schools and more mixed, and larger attendances.

PROPOSED SCALE OF STATE SALARIES.

Division.	3rd Class.	2nd Class.	1st Class.
2nd.	£26.	£40.	£56.
1st.	£30.	£46.	£64.

Good service pay ought to be conferred upon all deserving Teachers after 7 years' service, in annual increments, till after 17 years, the salaries would stand thus—

Division.	3rd Class.	2nd Class.	1st Class.
2nd.	£32.	£50.	£70.
1st.	£32.	£58.	£80.

A scheme of retiring allowances and pensions, on an equitable and generous basis, ought forthwith to be devised and carried into operation. This would be but a simple act of justice and expediency; for surely no servant of the State is more worthy of a support in old age than the man who has worn out both mind and body in the instruction of youth, and we can conceive no measure that would be attended with more powerful effects in securing the services of men worthy the name of National Schoolmasters.



## No. III.

1.—The schools are sufficiently numerous; perhaps, in some cases, too much so. The appliances are, in most cases, insufficient, rendered more so by the Board withdrawing the Triennial Grant. The school buildings are, very frequently, totally unsuited for educational purposes.

We are of opinion that, in all cases where paid monitors are now employed, properly qualified and well paid assistants should be substituted, the monitorial scheme having proved a failure, and that, too, for many reasons.

We would further add, that the means cannot be pronounced sufficient until any man, no matter how humble his circumstances, is enabled to give his child such an education as will enable him to enter college.

2.—No. (a) By no means. (b) Teachers rarely exclude pupils for non-payment. (c) We know of no case of the kind. (d) In this locality there are none. (e) In rural districts, children are usually kept at home during seed and harvest time, to assist their parents, and also during very cold weather. (f) Ignorance of the value of Education on the part of the parents, together with the apathy induced by extreme poverty.

3.—The allocation of a small sum of money to each school to be distributed among the pupils in the form of prizes, as in Model Schools, would do much, while the proper heating of the school houses, during the Winter months, would do more. If, by any means, the local gentry could be induced to establish a fund for clothing the very poor, as a reward for regular attendance, a great improvement would follow.

4.—*We believe it is.* (a) *In a country like this, so long distracted by party feelings, the best possible remedy is to train up the children together: friendships contracted in youth often last during an entire lifetime.* (b) *As the pupils of every creed in attendance at National Schools are intended to mix in after life, the earlier that intercourse is commenced the better, particularly where it is under the careful supervision of parties remarkable for impartiality, as the National Teachers are.* (c) *We know of no class of laymen who would raise any objections to the Mixed System, if not worked upon to do so by the clergy, while many of the most intelligent are decidedly in favor of it. The strongest efforts of clergymen often fail to make schools denominational, in cases where they attempt it.*

5.—The children of farmers, as a general rule, continue longest at school, though at certain seasons, as before stated, they are kept at home; those of tradesmen are more regular in attendance, but are generally withdrawn earlier; while labourers are, from their



poverty, compelled to send their children to business as soon as their services are of any value to employers of labour.

6.—Teachers, prompted partly by humane motives, and partly by the desire to secure a sufficient average attendance to warrant the payment of Board's salary, have left the payment of school-fees voluntary, as a departure from this rule kept many of the children away; as a natural consequence, Teacher's receipts from this source are a mere cipher.

7.—There are no night schools in this district. Without practical experience, we do not wish to advance any theoretical views.

8.—The present system of inspection might be vastly improved by the adoption of the following modifications:—(1.) By holding the examinations twice a-year, on days that would give all the pupils receiving instructions at the several schools an opportunity of presenting themselves before the Inspector; desultory visits might then be paid in order to exercise such a supervision as would assure all concerned that everything was going well. At present, an examination may be held during the absence of a number of the best pupils, and an unfavourable report made at a time when the school is, in reality, working well. (2.) By the appointment of Inspectors from amongst the Board's First Class Teachers of long standing, whose experience and qualifications would be a sure guarantee for the efficient discharge of the duties of an Inspector.

9.—After a careful consideration of the subject, we are of opinion that the best means of improving the Teacher's position, and at the same time of increasing the efficiency of his school, would be: (1.) Securing him his situation as long as his private character and discharge of public duties are such as should be expected from a man in his position. On this point less has been said (for obvious reasons) than might have been. Instances are known of managers dismissing, and threatening with dismissal, for matters foreign to the Teacher's legitimate duties, and in numerous instances for attending the Training Department. (2.) By raising his salary to the amount his important services render him entitled to, and allowing it to increase with length of service and efficiency. (3.) By opening the higher offices at the disposal of the Board to deserving Teachers: few things would have a healthier effect upon the entire system than this. (4.) By granting a full and fair inquiry where such a thing is demanded by the Teacher, for the purpose of removing the impression made by an evil report from any quarter.

10.—The aggregate proficiency of the entire school is taken into account in the present mode of classifying and paying Teachers, and in our opinion, is the one best suited to the successful working of any Educational Scheme in a country like Ireland, inasmuch as no Teacher can rise in his profession or even retain his salary with-



out close application to business, in order to work his pupils up to the required programme, a glance at which will convince any reasonable man, acquainted with the difficulties to be overcome, that it will require all the energies of the best Teacher to arrive at the results insisted upon by the Board.

The introduction of the English System would materially injure the cause of Education, by concentrating the teaching power upon particular pupils, to the neglect of the idle, slow, and irregular,—in fact, the class for whom the Government Grant was mainly intended.

It is unnecessary for us to recapitulate the arguments brought forward by our colleagues, pointing out the obstacles which the English System would meet with in this country, we have, however a suggestion to offer : let a number of Teachers, nominated by the Central Association, and an equal number of the most ardent admirers of the "Result System," be summoned before the Royal Commission, and allowed to reason the matter out in their presence. The adoption of this course would be the best and easiest solution of the question.

11.—The payment of school fees is every day growing less, for reasons already assigned.

12.—Through the exertions of the Roman Catholic clergy, the Christian Brothers are introduced wherever it is possible to maintain them ; other schools have almost died out.

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#### No. IV.

1.—In general they are ; but in nearly all schools there is a want of maps, charts, &c., owing to the withdrawal of the Triennial Grant of free stock formerly given to each school. At present the Teacher must provide himself with these or else do without them.

2.—They do not. Cause : partly because the assistance of the children is required by the parents at certain seasons of the year ; partly owing to neglect of parents ; partly because the labouring classes are compelled to send their children to work for their bread ; but chiefly owing to the fact that parents cannot send their children to school even tolerably clad.

3.—A plan which might be partially successful would be to institute periodic examinations of the children at which prizes would be given to any child making a certain number of attendances within a given period. Another plan would be to make the payment of school fees compulsory, whether the children attended or not ; and in the case of the poorer children to have the employers and landed proprietors pay for them. This would induce such em-



ployers and proprietors to insist on the attendance at school of such children.

4.—*It is the opinion of the intelligent lay portion of the community that it is highly beneficial.*

5.—The necessity poor children are under of going to some employment early, abbreviates the period of school life, and causes a diminution of the attendance.

6.—The instruction is not gratuitous, though but little better. We are of opinion school fees might be imposed with advantage on all but the mere labouring class.

7.—Night Schools. For children who have been compelled to leave school early, and whose education is consequently imperfect, consisting merely in being able to read with labor, to scrawl their names and add a few digits, we believe the establishment of such schools would be attended with advantage, if strictly and morally conducted. Where idleness and ignorance are, there also will be crime, and such schools in the hands of experienced, upright, conscientious men, might be the means of doing a great deal of good, as well as preventing a great deal of evil.

8.—The system of inspection carried out by the National Board is, in our opinion, quite sufficient for its purpose.

9.—The best and most practicable means of improving the Teachers' position, and increasing the efficiency of their schools, is to increase the present miserable salaries so as to enable them to live in comparative comfort, and to grant retiring pensions to those who, through old age or infirmity, have become incapacitated and no longer able to perform their arduous duties. To do their work faithfully and well, it is necessary that they should give their whole minds to it, but it is impossible for them to do this considering the reward they receive. Their minds must necessarily wander from their work : they are thinking, perhaps, of the squalid poverty which awaits them in the interior of their hovels after their day's toil is over, or, perchance, of the last resource of the poor worn-out Teacher, the workhouse. Let the Irish National Teachers be put on a level with the other branches of the public service, by granting them, first, payment adequate to their labours, and secondly, some provision for old age. Then will they be contented and happy ; then will they give their hearts to their work ; and then will National Education become really useful to the Irish people.

10.—Salaries should be based on the classification of the Teachers, combined with the proficiency of their pupils. We are of opinion that the system of payment by results sought to be introduced into this country on the same plan as, or something similar to that now pursued in England, would be nothing short of cruelty to the Teachers, and that instead of benefiting the country it would be injurious to it. Many of the schools are situated in rural districts, among a population scarcely removed above actual want ; as



a consequence, the attendance must be low and fluctuating, so that it would be impossible for even the most skilful Teacher to produce such results as would entitle him even to his present salary, which is miserable in the extreme. Again, the country would be deprived of the services of many of the best Teachers, who would be forced to leave the service of the Board to seek a remuneration elsewhere, adequate to their labours. Moreover, many of the children for whose benefit National Education is intended, would, properly speaking, receive no education at all; for a Teacher, however conscientious he may be, will have recourse to the system of cramming. Every Teacher knows the children who will be likely to produce him the best results on the day of inspection, and it is only natural to think that he will bestow his whole attention on these, to the detriment of those whose parents cannot afford to forego their wages, and who can only attend school for a few months of the year at most.

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### No. V.

1. The schools are sufficiently numerous, but the supply of apparatus is scanty. The withdrawal of the Triennial free grant is regarded as seriously detrimental to the furtherance of education, as the Teacher, without the proper appliances, feels his best efforts fall a good deal short of their effectiveness.

2.—They do not. (a) In some rare instances. (b) In many cases it is, more especially at some seasons of the year. (c) Yes, in some rare cases. (d) A few such cases may possibly occur, but they are not generally observable. (e) In some cases, at certain seasons. (f) Want of food, clothing, or both; apathy of parents; the employment universally of females at sewed muslin, &c.

3. A variety of means have been suggested. Some advocate compulsory education: one or two would resort to such an extreme measure, only when every other means would fail. Some would recommend that the local clergy should press children to attend school. Some, again, would advise the imposition of a local school tax, and some that periodic prizes should be distributed to the most advanced pupils, and to the best attenders.

4.—*So far as mere Secular Education is concerned, the majority look upon the mixed system of Education as beneficial. They do not, however, regard it as beneficial to religion. They consider that, if better facilities were given for the imparting of religious instruction, the mixed system would, perhaps, be superior to any other in creating a kindly feeling among the professors of different creeds.*

*The minority regard the denominational system as more favourable to the advancement both of Secular and Religious Education.*

*As regards the popular feeling on the subject, the question it involves*



*is not much discussed. Clergymen, however—particularly the Catholic clergy—are decidedly in favour of the denominational system.*

5.—Farming operations keep the children of country schools from attending at certain seasons of the year. The duration of their attendance each year is necessarily limited, but they sometimes remain at school till they are 23 or 24 years of age.

6.—The instruction is in a large measure gratuitous. The number of pupils who pay school fees varies from 30 to 100 per cent. Under present circumstances, it is not considered expedient to charge more than one penny per week.

7.—Night Schools are held only during the Winter months, and in no case are they conducted by National Teachers. In fact, such Teachers are extremely unwilling to undertake any extra duties, because, after the toils and fatigues of the day, they feel the necessity of some slight relaxation from the mental labour incidental to the depressing routine of their school duties. Where Night Schools are held, they are attended by boys alone, and the range of instruction is confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic.

8.—It is the general opinion that inspection might be made more efficient than it is at present. The Teachers complain that the visits of Inspectors are not sufficiently frequent, and that there is not sufficient time devoted to the actual examination of pupils : while too much of it is expended in examining accounts, collecting statistics, answering obsolete queries, and writing remarks in the Observation Book. They hold that only one school should be visited each day, so that no time might be lost in passing from school to school. Three Teachers suggest that in new schools, or schools conducted by newly-appointed Teachers, Inspectors should take part in the actual work of the schools for a whole week or fortnight at a time.

9.—Salaries should be raised to such a pitch as to prevent the necessity of Teachers engaging in other occupations. Their minds would not then be distracted between the requirements of two different employments, and they would be enabled to devote their entire attention to their own proper duties. It is also essential to the proper discharge of their duties that the Teachers should reside near their schools. The erection of suitable residences and the granting of adequate salaries would be very good and practicable means of improving the position of the Teachers, and increasing the efficiency of their schools. The mere elevation of the Teacher's social status would go a great way in adding to the effectiveness of his labours.

Some Teachers of the Association recommend the adoption of the system of monthly payments. They are unanimous in advocating the payment of retiring allowances, in the shape of quarterly or monthly pensions.



10.—The Teachers are unanimous in recommending that salaries should be based on the following elements: (1.) Classification. (2.) Annual average attendance, if above 50. (3.) Per centage of promotions to annual average attendance. (4.) Length of service. They are also of opinion that there should be only three classes of Teachers, and that there should be no probationary class.

“If it be thought desirable to base salaries on results only, that is, on the proficiency of the scholars, should the payment be calculated separately for each scholar, and for each subject, or should they be based on the aggregate proficiency of the whole school?”

The Teachers all think that in such a contingency, the salary should be based on the aggregate proficiency of the whole school.

11.—In some places they are on the increase, in other localities the reverse is the case, while in some districts they seem to be stationary.

12.—Schools not National are decreasing. Several schools formerly not National have lately connected themselves with the National Board.

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## No. VI.

1.—The number of schools is quite sufficient, but the means for imparting education are defective, for the following reasons: *First*,—In a great many schools there are little else than bare walls, since the Triennial grant was withdrawn, and Teachers cannot, out of their miserable salaries, provide maps and other requisites, and in few instances do the Managers take any interest in the matter. *Secondly*,—The average attendance required by the Commissioners is too great. We think any school, which has an average of 40, should have the services of an Assistant; and in this case the maximum attendance will often amount to 80 or 90, and no Teacher can efficiently instruct so large a number, as much of his time is occupied in keeping order, and attending to the wants of the children. We think, further, if the average were 50 a monitor should also be granted; by this means the children would obtain a greater amount of instruction in their very limited period of attendance at the schools. *Thirdly*,—The books at present in use are very badly adapted to the capacities of the children—not being progressive: for example, the step from First to Second is unreasonable; and the child is often disgusted with attempting what it cannot accomplish. Lessons for the young should be simple, amusing, instructive, interesting, &c. Thus the present drudgery would be converted into profitable employment.



2.—They do not. (a) We do not know a case in which even the smallest children might not attend—in few instances being obliged to travel more than half a mile. (b) Certainly not; for Teachers are only too generous in this way. (c) We know of no case of the kind. (d) There exists none in this locality. (e) This, with poverty, is the great cause of irregular attendance, as regards the children of farmers and labourers. If the Teachers were better paid, efficient men would have more heart, and administer education with more spirit—the greatest inducement for parents to send their children to school.

3.—We would suggest a liberal distribution of premiums to children, making a certain number of attendances; and in the case of the poorer classes, some means of providing comfortable clothing for them, either from some local source, or out of the consolidated fund—not having even scanty, much less comfortable clothing, this causes a decrease in the winter season of from 18 to 20 per cent., and it may be in some localities much more. Compulsory education would be very efficient if the above evil were remedied, but without this it would be impracticable.

4.—*We think Teachers should not be expected to answer this question.*

5.—The difficulty of providing labourers, on the part of the farmer, on the one hand, and the desire, perhaps the necessity, of earning wages, on the part of the poorer classes, on the other, causes the attendance of the children to be very irregular in spring and autumn, and causes them to remain but a short period at the schools.

6.—The instruction given in the majority of schools may be looked upon as gratuitous, the average in this locality being about 2s. per year for each pupil. A local tax would be preferable. If a Teacher impose fees, many would be deprived of education altogether.

7.—Nothing more useful for adults; they ought to be liberally encouraged, for those whose early education has been neglected.

8.—We consider it quite sufficient for its purpose, but we think one of the examinations should be public. Owing to an Inspector's visit at an unfavourable season, or an unfavourable day, there may be an unfavourable report of an efficient school: this argues against payment by results.

9.—Undoubtedly, the best means of improving the position of the Teachers, and making them content with their situations, and increasing the efficiency of their schools, is to largely increase their present miserable salaries. How disheartening, when they know that their brethren in England and Scotland are paid so much higher than they! Retiring pensions ought to be granted, free residences, with a portion of land attached, provided, where they



could reduce to practice that theory they obtain in training; it seems senseless, and an useless expenditure to teach them what they have no means of carrying out. The theory, without the practice, is of no use.

10.—Salaries should certainly be based on classification, and we think a very good system, at least by results, is in force at present—the Inspector having to be satisfied that the school is efficiently conducted before he recommends for training or promotion. The system of payment by results, in the usual sense, would be reducing the Teachers from servants to slaves.

11.—The late reports of the Commissioners shew that local contributions and school fees are greatly on the decrease.

12.—Christian Brothers' schools are largely on the increase.

## No. VII.

1.—We consider schools sufficiently close; in some cases, injuriously so. Teachers should be allowed an Assistant in cases where the attendance is from 40 to 45. Assistants are preferred to paid Monitors. The school should be made *comfortable* for pupils during winter, and to effect this, the Manager should see fuel provided for use of children, and also a permanent stock of school furniture, as maps, a dry floor, glazing, &c., kept up in schools. Such contributions not to be levied from Teachers. Residences, rent free, should in every case be attached to a National School.

2.—The poorer classes *do not* avail themselves of the means of education within their reach. (a) It is not. (b) No. (c) No. (d) No. (e) This is one of the most telling causes. (f) Pure and culpable negligence on part of parents.

3.—A system of compulsory attendance for at least six months in the year, to be enforced by the civil authorities on all children under a certain age; and subjecting parents who wilfully neglect its provisions to fine—cases of necessity, as sickness, to be excluded. Payment in advance by *all* children, and under every circumstance would, in our opinion, meet the case, as the gross neglect of parents is the principal cause of unsteady attendance; and this neglect is, in most part, to be attributed to ignorance of the advantages which education confers, and the slight value set upon it by the parents, especially when it can be obtained without payment of school fees. The best paying pupils are, also, the most regular, the most punctual in attendance, the most attentive to their lessons, and the most tractable in school; and such being our experience, we consider *this fact* argues powerfully for a system of universal payment. A *rate*



*in aid*, levied upon property same as Poor Rate and County Cess, and paid to Teacher in lieu of school fees—*One Penny* per week to be strictly enforced as fees from all parents not amenable to rate.

The rule by which a pupil cannot be struck off the roll without 13 weeks continuous absence tends to create an irregular attendance by allowing too great latitude for non-attendance, and it would be well that where a pupil has been *once* struck off for absence the difficulty of re-admission should be increased, and thereby punctual attendance secured.

4.—*It is not injurious, in our opinion. The popular feeling is indifferent on the subject, so long as the school is well worked.*

5.—In the case of farmers and operative tradesmen, it causes an irregular attendance, and shortens the period of school life.

6.—Partly gratuitous and partly not. As before expressed, we consider school fees should be imposed in every case.

7.—No night schools in this district.

8.—The Teachers are satisfied with the system of inspection.

9.—The best and most practical means of improving the condition of the Teachers are: an increase of salary, from Government grant; an endowment of at least £5 from every Manager of a National School; retiring pensions; stricter attention to school fees.

10.—In our opinion, salaries should be based on a mixture of all three of these elements, but payment by classification should largely predominate. Capitation should have more effect in town schools than in those situated in rural districts. Should salaries be based on results, it should be on the aggregate proficiency of the whole school.

11.—Payment of fees and local contributions are decreasing; even in cases where the average attendance is on the increase, a sensible falling off is observed by the Teachers in the receipt of fees.

12.—The National Schools are supplanting all others for the education of the poor.

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## No. VIII.

1.—The number of schools is sufficient. In large schools there is no provision made for salary to Assistant. There is a want of maps, charts, and apparatus. No "free stock" grants now made by Commissioners.

2.—No. Poverty chief cause. (a) No. (b) No. (c) Certainly not. (d) No. (e) The case in spring and autumn.

3.—By giving a number of appointments yearly, such as the Excise, to the best pupils competing from National Schools. Raise, if you can, the country in material prosperity. This is the best specific.



4.—*I have been requested to say, respectfully, that for very weighty reasons, this Association has to decline giving any answer to Query No. 4.*

5.—Agricultural employments, the only ones in this locality, reduce the attendance in spring and autumn.

6.—Gratuitous, in many instances, especially of late years, in schools where the average attendance is at or near *minimum*. Scholars are often withdrawn when payments are pressed; the Teachers think it better in such cases, to secure the State grant and forego school fees. There is a rule of the Commissioners which provides a small payment by patron, for children unable to give school fees. This is a dead letter.

9.—Grant a large increase of salary and retiring pensions. When we find from the *blue books* that the pay of an English Teacher is £3, and of a Scotch Teacher, £2 10s., for £1 received by the Irish Teacher, while the cost of living is quite as expensive, of late years, in Ireland as in Great Britain, it is very evident there is an injustice done.

10.—Class salaries are, for many reasons, to be preferred.

11.—School fees are on the decrease here.

12.—Hedge Schools have disappeared. Church Education Schools are decreasing.

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### No. IX.

Same reply as No. VIII.

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### No. X.

1.—Sufficient.

2.—Partly owing to inability to forego children's wages, as well as to poor parents leaving it generally optional with their children whether they avail themselves of the existing means of education or not.

3.—Gratuitous, combined with compulsory, education only, can secure the regular attendance of such children. It may be objected that such compulsion would interfere with the liberty of the subject; but it is such an interference as would prevent a large class of subjects from being guilty of neglect calculated to militate materially against their own interest in after life.



4.—*Want of experience in the working of the mixed system, does not warrant us in expressing an opinion.*

6.—In towns, about two-thirds of those attending National Schools receive gratuitous education. Little or no fees paid to the Teachers of Country Schools. Teachers who enforce the payment of school fees become very unpopular. The children are withdrawn in such cases, and seldom return to the same school.

7.—As all the means which have been resorted to have failed to raise school fees, to any amount that could benefit the general body, we would suggest that a local tax (educational) be imposed, and collected as an additional rate by the respective Unions throughout Ireland. By this means, only a small fraction of said tax could be diverted from its purpose.

8.—Evening Schools are not attended with the results which they may be expected to produce,—1st, Owing to the irregular attendance of evening pupils; 2nd, To the Teacher's energies being overtaxed during the previous part of the day, and more in need of relaxation than of additional hours of mental labour.

8.—Sufficient. At the risk of a digression, let us remark that, if Inspectors would apprise Managers of their intended visits to their respective schools, it would do much towards establishing friendly, if not intimate, relations between both parties—a thing very desirable at present, as far as our judgment leads us to believe.

9.—Let Teachers and Assistants be made to appreciate their positions, by giving them liberal salaries, and *pensions* when incapacitated by infirmity, sickness, or old age. Let residences be provided for them, and a stimulus is given to redoubled energy.

10.—Relieve the Principal of the attention and supervision of all in first class grade, by establishing Infant Schools in populous towns. Then only can he bring to bear with effect his teaching power upon the other *grades*. Monitors may then be dispensed with. When the salaries of Teachers are respectable, a class of intelligent boys may be easily found in every locality who will study to qualify themselves for the office of School Teachers, and fill up vacancies as they occur.

11.—Let salaries be based on classification as at present. Let not the Teacher be left depending upon a fluctuating salary by "results." A Teacher, let us suppose, has a class of intelligent children in his school, who do him much credit on the days of *examination*, for a year or two. These gradually drop off to be apprenticed, or to be otherwise employed. The Teacher may not possibly show such high results for a period extending over two years after, though working equally hard. Would it not be unjust to deprive such a Teacher of any portion of the salary of previous years? Nay, we have known a severe winter and spring, with a deadly epidemic in their train, to tell harder against a



school than the neglect of a careless Teacher. If payment by "results" be at all established, let it be as supplementary to a standing salary.

12.—On the decrease.

13.—On the decrease, if we except those of the Christian Brothers.

## No. XI.

1.—No; on account of the insufficiency of maps and charts; books, though cheap, are still too dear. No houses built for Teachers to reside in, and salaries miserably poor.

2.—No. (a) Not generally. (c) No. (e) In many cases. (f) They don't value the advantage of education, seeing Teachers, who are all good scholars, in rather poor circumstances indeed.

3.—Compel them to attend, or give premiums to best boys at Midsummer and at Christmas.

4.—*Beneficial.* *The popular feeling is strongly in favour of the National System.*

5.—Detrimental.

6.—Not where Managers allow their Teachers to enforce the payment of fees.

8.—No. We would be glad to see another class of Inspectors who could spend more time at the schools, and attend on Saturdays in the centre of each district, to solve any difficulties the Teachers may meet in the course of their studies, and to prepare the second and third class Teachers for the annual examinations.

9.—Augment the salaries. Premiums to be given at public examinations, to be held twice a year, would much increase the efficiency of the schools.

10.—Salaries should be based on classification only, and should be such as would enable the Teacher to give his whole time to his school.

11.—On the increase.

12.—Decreasing, except Christian Brothers' Schools, which are slowly increasing.

There is one point which can hardly be brought too prominently before the Commission, viz. : Insecurity of tenure. It is a frightful thing for men of education to feel that they are at the absolute will and caprice of any one man. We could mention instances where Teachers were sent about their business without knowing why. A man's case should always be investigated by two or three impartial judges before being dismissed.



No. XII.

- 1.—Sufficient.
- 2.—No ; and the only cause we can assign is neglect and apathy on the part of parents.
- 3.—Rewards to meritorious children who have made a regular attendance, while at the same time nothing short of compulsion will enforce the attendance of some degraded characters, such as may be found in towns and cities.
- 4.—*We think the system is not unpopular, and that it is the best for this country.*
- 5.—At two seasons of the year, spring and autumn, it causes the attendance to be very irregular, particularly in rural districts. Period of school life, from 5 to 15 years of age.
- 6.—It is partly gratuitous, and we find as a general rule that the attendance of children who pay is very regular.
- 8.—We do.
- 9.—Increase of salaries and retiring pensions.
- 10.—On the classification of the Teacher, combined with the efficiency of his school.
- 11.—Decreasing.
- 12.—Decreasing, being now very few in number.

They beg to add further, that they consider the absolute power vested in the Managers, to dismiss Teachers at will, as most oppressive ; also, *that they have ascertained by their individual experience that the mixed system has worked well ;* nevertheless, they consider the bulk of the people here would prefer a Denominational System.

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No. XIII.

1.—Sufficient ; but there are obstacles in the way of their efficiency. Generally speaking, in this part of the country the school-rooms are quite too small to afford sufficient accommodation to the number of children attending them, and in most cases they are indifferently supplied with school apparatus.

2.—We would say in general, with few exceptions, they do ; as we find, when the children are not employed in agriculture, unless some unavoidable cause interferes, the schools are well attended. But there are obstacles here also that materially affect the education of the poorer classes. Extreme poverty compels not only fathers, but the male adults to go to England for employment in the beginning of summer, where they remain till the latter end of



autumn. The home labour is left to the children, and very many are then withdrawn from school. But we find that at least one half of these so withdrawn are employed in *herding cattle*. This evil we attribute to the unsettled state of the land question, and the total indifference on the part of the landlords to evince an interest in the welfare of their tenantry. The tenements of the small landholders are so promiscuously arranged, and without fences, that children who could otherwise attend school are obliged to be kept at home during the summer and autumn to take care of the crops. Now, if landlords would only cause a proper division of land to be instituted,—*i.e.*, what is commonly called striping—each person would have his portion separated from those of his neighbour; fencing could be done with little trouble, and the time spent by the children in herding could be spent at school. (a) We think not. (b) School Fees are too miserable to be the means of precluding any child from the benefits of education. (c) We know of none. (d) We know no such instance. (e) No; the children of paupers are as welcome to the Teacher as the children of those who pay. (f) None, save those mentioned.

3.—While the social condition of the country remains as at present, and the land question unsettled, the poverty of the people will render it difficult to make the attendance of children more regular at school.

4.—*We have not sufficient experience of the effect of educating children of different religious denominations together to warrant us in answering this question. But we have always found a friendly feeling to exist between children of different religious persuasions educated in the same school, which feeling continued in after life.*

5.—Agricultural operations, and herding cattle in summer and autumn, are the only causes we can assign to affect school attendance.

6.—It might be said to be almost gratuitous, as the majority of the children pay nothing, and the miserable fees paid by the remainder are so insignificant as to form but a very small item in the Teacher's income. The condition of the country would require to be improved before school fees could be imposed with any advantage.

8.—We consider it both efficient and useful, and zealous Teachers are always well pleased to meet their Inspectors, as they consider their suggestions very beneficial.

9.—Increase his present miserable class salary, grant him a retiring pension, when, through age or infirmity, he becomes unable to follow his vocation; and a Manager should not be allowed to dismiss his Teacher without sufficient cause.

10.—On classification, combined with efficiency of scholars.



No. XIV.

1.—Yes, as to the number of schools; but their efficiency is much impaired by the want of local aid for Assistants' salaries, and the want of apparatus for collective teaching, which for some years past have been purchased, when required, by the Teacher, and, when their low salaries are taken into account, this charge comes very heavy on them; it would be a great boon if the Triennial Free Stocks were again given.

2.—No; poverty is a great cause in the towns; employment, in the country, in spring and autumn. (a) The schools are within an easy distance, in most cases. (b) Where parents are poor, these are never exacted. (c) The Teachers are generally approved of. (d) We know of none. (e) The great bulk do not pay fees.

3.—An effort should be made by the clergymen of various denominations to induce the parents of the poor to send their children to school; people comfortably situated seldom require advice in this way.

4.—*Most of the schools we know of are nearly denominational, few children but R. Catholics attend; but, in the schools where there are a few Protestants, the children grow up together in friendly terms, and retain (as some of us know) the same kindly feelings in after life. The clergymen of various denominations, however, are anxious to have the Denominational System.*

5.—The children are removed at an early age from school generally, in this part of the country, to assist their parents in agricultural pursuits, or as soon as they can get employment at very low wages. No experience here of factory employment.

6.—Mostly gratuitous; the fees in the best attended schools seldom exceed £8 or £10 yearly. Should Teachers insist upon school fees, there would be a considerable falling off in the attendance, and those most requiring instruction—the very poor—would be altogether deprived of the benefits of it.

7.—No Night Schools in this locality.

8.—Inspection quite sufficient. Our Inspector generally makes three inspections, and as many or more incidental visits to each school in the year.

9.—A considerable increase of the salaries of all classes, and the abolition of school fees, except where parents of comfortable children choose to make a present to the Teacher; and pensions to Teachers, when age or infirmities render them unable to perform the duties of their situations.

10.—On classification, together with the efficient state of the schools, in which numbers might be taken into account. Payments by results would not at all suit Irish National Schools, where the



attendance is so irregular; and the Teacher would naturally pay most attention to children of parents in comfortable circumstances, who would attend regularly, and rather neglect those who would attend casually, as they could not expect credit or pecuniary remuneration by them, and those very children most requiring instruction would be to a great extent neglected.

11.—Not progressing; in some cases they are much less than in former years.

12.—No schools but National in our neighbourhood.

## No. XV.

1.—In the *number* of school-houses the means for educating the poor in this county are nearly sufficient, but not entirely so, as many landlords refuse sites for National Schools, and, in some instances, are opposed to tolerating even the existence of non-vested National Schools on their properties. In the *appliances*, however, in the schools for imparting the necessary instruction, there is a deficiency, as in the absence of school apparatus, maps, &c., and also in books for the poor, in consequence of the discontinuance of the National Board's Triennial Grant of Free Books—which so peculiarly suited their exigencies.

2.—On mature deliberation, we believe the poor (save for their great necessities) are disposed to avail themselves of the existing means of education. It is true they sometimes appear *apathetic*, but in reality we believe it is their abject and depressing poverty is at fault. The attendance, for instance, in all the country schools, this winter is nearly doubled, the cause being the abundant harvest we have had. Their neglect is not due to (*a*) distance from schools as they are pretty thick over the country; nor is it in reference to school fees, (*b*) on account of the generosity of the Teachers; however, if the payment of school-fees were insisted upon, the attendance of the poorer classes at school would be diminished. I have never known a want of confidence (*c*) in the Teacher, to withhold the poor from attending school; nor religious (*d*) scruples; but "inability to forego children's wages," has so operated.

3.—If rewards (even in books) were given to children who would attend well; if there were more offices of paid Monitors, and recognition and furtherance of unpaid Monitors; if entrance to District Model Schools, unhampered by religious restrictions, rewarded youthful merit; if the rules for the lower appointments of the Civil Service were published in the schools, and situations offered to public competition; in a word, if the state extended the grasp of a friendly hand, through the medium of the National



Schools, to the poor; if the Schoolmaster's office were more lucrative and respectable; if learning commanded more honours and emoluments, then duty, ambition, emulation would incite and inspire the poor; their children would attend the schools, even at a sacrifice, and learning be cultivated with zeal, assiduity, and success.

4.—*Beneficial, and the people would be satisfied with it if left alone. It is productive of harmony, good feeling, and of friendships that last through life, and frequently heal religious animosities.*

5.—The effect of the industrial occupations is to very much diminish school attendance and the period of school life; as, in rural districts, even the children of middle-class farmers only attend during the summer and the winter—except the very young children, who may attend more uniformly. With the abject poor, the case is even worse.

6.—The instruction is not nominally "gratuitous," but virtually it may be considered to be so. I consider the average, per child in the year, perhaps below 2s., and that in many cases is paid in the shape of farm labour, or of payments in kind.

9.—Philosophy, and not selfishness, would suggest that the Teacher be paid a fair salary for his education and his toil; but the heart of Government (perhaps sharing in the national prejudice) has not yet sufficiently warmed to him, nor its breath breathed its kindly influence upon him. Perhaps it is no wonder; he is, as he now stands, a new creation, and the Government of the country, when it first recognised him, never anticipated he would become so educated, or possess so much moral power. When that "reformation" is effected in salary which is already accomplished in attainments, the social position of the Teacher will be improved, and the efficiency of the schools follow as a consequence. It is considered that by making the Teacher's office respectable—by attaching to it a liberal salary—his local influence on behalf of learning would be increased, and even his example operate in inducing children—and others ambitious of advancing—to attend school. It is also plain he would more heartily devote his energies to his business, and labour more zealously—as he would feel a happier man—in the cause of education.

10.—Salaries should be based on the classification of the Teachers, and on the proficiency of the pupils taken together, but never on the numbers in attendance.

11.—On the decrease; one reason is the poverty of the abject poor, and another is the *feeling of disinclination to pay*, that the vulgar possess, because that the Teacher is in receipt of "Government pay." Whether that sum be much or little, the poor think that it ought to suffice, because it is "sure;" and to my own knowledge, they always pay, and have paid National School fees with reluctance, because entertaining the above feeling.



## No. XVI.

1.—No ; the salaries should be considerably increased in order to induce young persons to *prepare* themselves for the office of Teacher, as well as to encourage efficient ones to remain in the service. In consequence of the present low rate of salaries, a large proportion of the men employed as Teachers are totally unfit for the office. Very many Teachers also are too old to be efficient. Retiring pensions, if granted, would induce these to make way for younger and—provided the salaries were increased—better men. The school-rooms, in many cases, are quite unsuitable as well as unhealthy. In many instances, too—almost in every instance where the Teacher does not provide better out of his own pocket—the desks and other furniture, together with apparatus, &c., are miserably bad : nothing like what should be inside of a school-room, where everything ought to preserve the appearance of order and neatness. If a residence for the Teacher were attached to each school, it would improve the present means of educating the poorer classes—we mean, *physical education* ; as thousands of poor children are compelled to stop out in the morning, some with very little to protect them from the pelting rain, the cold blast, or the nipping frost—they are compelled to stop out, we say, waiting for “the Master to come” in the mornings ; whereas, if a residence were provided for the latter, convenient to his school, unless he were a careless man, he would not only open the school at any time to receive his pupils, but he would also try to have it heated for them at an early hour in the mornings.

2.—No ; we would say that each of the causes mentioned in the question prevail in this locality to a greater or less extent, except two—(a) and (d). See answer to question 3.

3.—As the irregular attendance of children is to a very great extent owing to the extreme carelessness, as well as the ignorance, &c., of parents, and as we consider this an act of injustice to the children, we would strongly recommend that the Government be requested to protect the children as well as the parents, by enacting such laws as will compel the latter to do their duty to their offspring. Nothing short of compulsion will, in our opinion, induce a better or more regular attendance by the children at *our* schools. Children who do not attend regularly should by some means be got to pay double as much school fees or education tax as those who do ; the surplus could go to a general fund, as it would be injurious to hand it over to the Teacher, inasmuch as it would be his interest under such circumstances to have irregular attendance made by his pupils.



4.—*Beneficial to the great bulk of Teachers, at all events, as it causes a better attendance at their schools ; and, therefore, we say it is not from the Teachers that "materials for trustworthy replies" to such questions ought to be expected. Does not every one know that a Teacher will not injure his own welfare by recommending a denominational education, unless he is thoroughly convinced of the injurious effects attributed to the present Mixed System? and even then, there would be a temptation on the part of a Teacher to overlook these for his own benefit. This is our reply to Question 4, and we hope it shall not be considered "beside the question," but that the substance of it shall be embodied in any Report or Book that may be compiled from the answers to these questions.*

5.—See answer to question 3.

6.—The instruction given at schools in this locality is *almost* gratuitous, the school fees being only nominal, owing partly to the poverty of the people, and partly to the competition among the Teachers to see who can have the best attendance, as their salaries from the state, together with gratuities, &c., depend in a great measure on the attendance, while the schools are so numerous that it is extremely difficult to keep up the required attendance in them all, or even in the greater number of them. The Commissioners of National Education, by multiplying to an unlimited extent the number of schools, at the same time making the Teacher's salary in each case depend upon his average attendance, have put it out of the Teacher's power to impose school fees.

7.—We consider that a Teacher should be allowed the same pay for teaching a school at night as for teaching it during the day. This would be allowing a Teacher about half his ordinary salary for teaching a Night School.

8.—We consider that an Inspector should make a *public* visit every six months, for the purpose of classifying the pupils, as well as to ascertain the amount of work done. In ascertaining the amount of work done in a school in a given time, the Inspector should keep *strictly* to some well-defined programme. And the Teacher should be furnished with the very same instructions from the office, regarding inspection of schools, as those furnished to the Inspector, in order that there might be no misunderstanding in the matter. When making an incidental visit, which should be only made to schools not working satisfactorily, the Inspector ought not to examine : his business then should be to see how the teaching is being conducted, and to make his suggestions accordingly.

Before closing this, we wish to make a few remarks regarding the examination of Teachers—we mean the Teacher's examination when seeking promotion. We consider it a grievance to have to wait sometimes a year and a half, without knowing what may be the result of an examination. If a Teacher is to be promoted, he should be told at once ; if he is to be left stationary, he should be



told likewise. After standing an examination, if we ask to know the result from the examiner, he says he is not allowed to tell us ; if we write to the office, they say we cannot correspond with you ; we are ashamed to ask the Manager to write about it,—in fact, he would hardly write for us ; and so we are kept a year or a year and a half in suspense. It is heartless treatment !

There is one point more we wish you to bring under the notice of the Royal Commissioners,—that is, the arbitrary power invested in Managers of dismissing Teachers. We know nothing so cruel.

## No. XVII.

1.—Yes.

2.—No. (a) No ; except perhaps in a few rare cases. (b) No ; the less the amount of fees the worse the attendance. (c) It cannot be so, as there is usually a choice of Teachers. (d) Certainly not, wherever the principles of the system are known. (e) This is a much prevailing cause. Where parents are poor, they avail themselves of every means of making a penny. Even farmers withhold their children from school, when able to work ever so little.

3.—Nothing can remedy this state of affairs but making education compulsory, and of course having the Teacher paid by the State.

4.—*By all means, highly beneficial. Its beneficial results are attested by universal experience.*

5.—The effect is decidedly injurious, especially in agricultural districts, and in towns and places where manufactures are carried on.

6.—Not altogether gratuitous, but payments are small and very irregular and defective. School fees ought to be imposed in all cases, and Managers should pay where parents cannot.

7.—Not desirable, except under special circumstances.

8.—No. There is a want of uniformity in school examinations which generally tells against the Teachers. There ought to be more of a sameness in the method of examination.

9.—Adequate salaries from the State and retiring pensions. If the present revenues cannot afford these, a school tax should be imposed, and when once the Teacher is put in an *independent position*, nothing more is needed to increase the efficiency of his school.

10.—Payment by results will never work in this country.



No. XVIII.

1.—Yes, as far as the supply of Teachers and schools is concerned, but in some rural districts the schools are not kept in proper working order.

2.—Yes, with few exceptions. In a few cases the apathy of the parents leads to irregular attendance, but, in general, the inability to forego the children's wages during the seasons of spring, summer, and autumn, and the want of proper clothing, prevent multitudes of children from availing themselves of the existing advantages.

3.—An educational school tax, to be levied in every way similar to the poor rates, must necessarily cause a more regular attendance.

4.—*We think this question ought to be answered by the Managers, not by the Teachers.*

5.—Irregularity of attendance, and to materially shorten the period of school life.

6.—School fees being in most cases merely nominal, the instruction imparted is in reality gratuitous to the great bulk of the children attending the National Schools. From the Teacher's salary being dependent on a certain minimum attendance, stated in the Board's Circulars, it is absolutely impossible for the Teacher to adopt any mode of increasing school fees.

7.—Since the school-going period of life is so very short in this country, provision should be made in the form of night schools for those whose necessitous condition in life prevents them from obtaining instruction in the day schools.

8.—If the object of inspection be to ascertain the amount of work done by the Teacher, we believe the present mode to be sufficient for its purpose.

9.—Increased salary and a school tax.

10.—(1.) The classification of the Teacher ought to be determined by literary merit. (2.) A *bonus* for each child who passes a creditable examination. The first would have the effect of raising the literary attainments of the Teacher. The second would be a stimulant to increased exertion in the improvement of his pupils.

11.—On the decrease, since the people became aware that the Teacher's salary depends upon the attendance in his school. In fact, the people think that school fees should not be asked at all, as they believe the Government pays the Teacher sufficiently well.

12.—Not on the increase, with the exception of one Convent School.



## No. XIX.

Anxious that the replies should be the exponents of more opinions than my own, I waited on the several members of our Committee. Their opinions, with my own, are embodied in the accompanying paper.

1.—Amplly sufficient.

2.—They do not. (a) In no case within my ken is the distance inconvenient. (b) School fees cannot be the cause, for the very poorest spend in useless luxuries, as tobacco, 600 per cent. more than school fees would be ; besides, I have never known an instance of a child being refused admission *free*, when the parent stated that he was unable to pay. (c) Schools are at such convenient distances, that, if a want of confidence be felt in a teacher, the pupil, with very trifling inconvenience, can transfer his attendance to another school. (d) I have *heard* of such scruples being possessed by those who profess to interest themselves in education, but very seldom by those really interested, viz., its recipients. I have never *known* an instance. (e) Wages may affect attendance slightly, (f) but the chief cause is the parents' carelessness.

3.—I can suggest none, except to make attendance compulsory, or to convince the parent, by the prospect of some immediate advantage, that it is for his benefit.

4.—*I am not aware of anything tending to shew it to be otherwise than beneficial. In the absence of such, I cannot avoid the conclusion that it is, and must be, beneficial. I cannot recollect an expression of popular feeling on the subject ; but, as the system has worked, and is working in my own school, for example, and, so far as I know, satisfactorily, in the absence of all objections against it on the part of its recipients, I do not think, and I dare not say, it is unpopular.*

5.—My experience is with agriculture only. It tends to make the attendance very irregular, but to prolong the period of school life ; inasmuch as young men can, and do, at certain seasons of the year, attend school, when such would be impossible had they been engaged in other professions.

6.—In many cases it is gratuitous. When school fees are paid, they are really little more than nominal. For the total amount, see the Board's Reports. Since the Board has, latterly, made attendance an element or condition of salary, for a Teacher, in many cases, to induce the absence or risk the loss of a pupil, by insisting on school fees, would be something suicidal.

8.—Amplly sufficient.

9.—The only means to improve the Teacher's condition is to pay him,—in the lowest class, what will place him above want ; in the higher, what will enable him to attain to comfort, with the cer-



tainty of pension when worn out. Every step in the Teacher's improvement will increase the efficiency of the schools. Even now, they are highly efficient.

10.—Numbers in attendance, and proficiency of pupils, have always formed important elements in the *classification* of Teachers. Hence payments based on "classification alone," is a "mixture of all three." Since the Teacher devotes his time and talents to his school, irrespective of its size, it is for his time (except it can be proved that he misspends it) he should be paid, and not for piece-work. Any other arrangement would amount to a breach of contract with those already in the service of the Board. Indeed, the Board's rule, introduced some years ago, which (without even an alleged fault), renders the Teacher's salary liable to be reduced, if the attendance fall below a certain average, has caused the most profound dissatisfaction. For an example of its working, take the following, which I believe, indeed, I may at once say, *I know* to be true. The Teacher of a certain school pressed a man, a merchant of the place, for school fees due. The man expressed dissatisfaction at having to pay, and, being aware of this rule, sent his children to another school, and, using his influence, prevailed on others to do so too. The attendance fell, the Teacher's salary was curtailed; when his Manager and Committee, alarmed, lest, what they called his "depression," should injure the school, dismissed him, after more than twenty years' service.

The feeling against paying by results is intense, and, judging from what I know, all but universal. It is evident that the periodical visits of an Inspector cannot enable him either fully to know, or correctly to estimate, the *results* of a Teacher's work.

To base payment on *attendance only* would be very fallacious, for there is a limit to the number a man can teach efficiently. If that limit be passed, teaching can only be attempted. The employment of Assistants is actually the same thing as to prevent the attendance increasing beyond a certain point: a large school being thus divided into what is equivalent to two or more medium-sized schools.

11, 12.—I have no reason to infer any change in the amount of fees, or in the number of schools not National.

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## No. XX.

I first submitted the following answers at one of our meetings. Every member agreed to them, save *one*, who argued against mixed education, but admitted that this arose from his want of personal experience, never having taught a mixed school.



1.—I believe that the number of schools is sufficient for the education of the poorer classes, if they were more equally distributed. In some places, I know there are more schools than are needed, while in other localities the surplus would be a great boon.

2.—The poorer classes do not avail themselves as much as they might of the existing means of education, and I firmly believe from experience that this neglect arises from carelessness on the part of parents, and nearly entirely from this cause alone. I myself teach many children free; and from many others, would they attend, I would ask nothing, knowing the poverty of their parents; and yet numbers of such children are ever playing about the streets, dirty, in bad company like themselves, and gradually getting a wildness which may, and often does, end in their becoming anything but good members of society. (a) There may be instances, *two or three* in a hundred, where children remain at home, owing to distance from school. (b) A similar proportion, or less, where they remain from poverty, *i.e.*, from inability to pay school fees and from scarcity of clothes. (c) The instances are rare indeed where want of confidence in the Teacher causes the non-attendance of children. (d) *Regarding religious and conscientious scruples, my knowledge and experience of many localities and Teachers convince me that the people, if unswayed by powers external to their own consciences, would support the school where their children would be best educated, irrespective of the creed or denomination of the Teacher. There may be instances indeed of parents so strictly watchful of the religious tendencies of the minds of their children, that their fears would prevent them from sending their families to Teachers whose persuasions were different from their own; but such instances are very rare, and I never knew them to exist among the poorer classes.* (e) A few parents may require, from sheer necessity, the slight wages their children can earn; but, as I have said above, the great cause of neglect, I firmly believe and daily experience, is downright carelessness of parents. (f) Another cause arises from the little respect shown to Teachers by many of their superiors. The people follow the example thus given; the Teacher is unable to change the habit, and the respect he receives from the inhabitants is less than he deserves: from this source, though latterly this is falling away, arises an assisting cause of the general carelessness.

3.—I know of no plan sufficiently strong to induce regular attendance of pupils, save governmental statute. Compulsory education, in some way or other, I believe to be indispensable. But this might spring from one of three sources—(a) If the landlords could be coaxed or pressed to use this compelling power; or, (b) If the clergymen were compelled to require their flocks to attend regularly, much might be gained on this point; but to both these methods there are so many and so powerful objections, that they may be left



out of consideration, and there, therefore, in my mind, remains nothing but, (c) legal interference. Compulsory education works well, I believe, in Prussia, and I think would here. It would also remove some of the burdens under which some National Teachers labour, particularly that one arising from the Board's rule about average attendances.

4.—As to question 4, I can speak very strongly. Residing in a district, and intimate with the Teachers and people of many others, where the population is greatly mixed, and where party feeling raged high and deadly in times not long past, and teaching with a mixed attendance, I can confidently assert that mixed education has done, and is still doing, much. It has been, and still is, beneficial towards abolishing sectarian bitterness, and generating and fostering kindly and affectionate relations among parents whose persuasions differ, but whose children are associates, competitors, and class-mates at the same school. I was a member of a Mutual Improvement Society here for some years, and I conscientiously and firmly believe that the associating together of our members more strongly tended to eradicate bad feeling, and propagate and cement brotherly acquaintance, than any circumstance I know of could possibly do among mixed associations or localities. This is scarcely direct, but I mention it to show how useful mixed education is in this district. And I believe the same good effects follow in all parts where the system exists.

Although there are many persons opposed to the mixed system, as carried out at present, I believe what I have said above is the popular feeling on the subject. I know that many who now oppose mixed education would give it their adhesion if better opportunity for religious instruction were given. For instance, if in every school having a mixed attendance, Teachers of denominations the same as the several religions, were provided. Thus, in a school where the majority were children belonging to the Established Church, let the Assistants be Presbyterian and Roman Catholic, the Head Teacher being Protestant, i.e., the same as the majority. Then, when the majority were Roman Catholics, let the Head Teacher be of that denomination, and his Assistants of the others. I know from conversation with many, clergymen and otherwise, that some such arrangement would go far to please many dissatisfied ones, and more especially—indeed, the system would be incomplete without it—if separate apartments were provided in each school for the children of the several denominations to receive religious instruction in, under the proper Teacher, or perhaps their own clergyman.

6.—The instruction given in the National Schools is usually for payment, but the exceptions to this are very, very numerous indeed. With a radius of many miles from my own school as centre, I know remarkably few schools where some children are not taught gratuitously; and to a much greater extent than the Teachers' Books show. In many schools, the "free" children number from five to seventy-five per cent. of the entire attendance. Were the parents imbued with a proper notion of education, they would not hesitate to get their children educated; and, were compulsory education a



law, scarcely one in a thousand of them but could pay some fees—though only a little—as well. Indeed, many people think that National Teachers are bound to teach gratuitously, and not seldom will a Teacher be told, “Sure, ye’re paid for teaching us, and why should I pay you also?”

7.—Night Schools are considered here a great boon. Unfortunately, National Teachers, after labouring hard all day, are often unwilling to spend three hours or so six nights in the week, for one shilling per scholar per month. I sometimes had Night Schools here, with an attendance of above forty, but I had to give it up.

9.—Regarding the Teachers’ position, I beg to refer to (f), question 2. As to improving that position, I consider the method simple enough, and I know of no better way to increase the efficiency of their schools than by improving themselves. Put the Teacher in the enjoyment of an income, which will enable him to occupy a position suitable to his calling. Give him a school-house and residence which will be a model and a credit to his locality. Make him a civil servant of the Crown, and not dependent on mere individual caprice. Give him the certainty of a supported future, when illness or old age incapacitates him. Let him have direct intercourse with the Commissioners, or whoever the heads of his educational system may be. Let him possess these enjoyments, and, if found necessary, *let admission to his calling be more strictly guarded*, and I have no hesitation in affirming that the Irish National Teacher will prove a benefit to his country, an ornament to society, the equal, or rather the superior, of any Teacher in the world, and a credit to the establishment under which he labours. He will be so freed from the fear of future and present distress, that he would bring to his daily duties a mind free from the care and uneasiness which distract him at present; and hence he could make his school efficient to the highest degree.

10.—Respecting salaries, if the present system of payment, *somewhat modified in detail*, were carried out, I believe it would be very generally acceptable. That is, let the classification depend on the Teacher’s ability and learning, as at present, judged by a certain programme; but let his success in having his pupils up to a certain published standard also be taken into account in his classification, such success, or failure, to be reported on by the Inspectors during their general visits, and not from the result of any one examination. Then, if the Teacher give instruction in subjects beyond the programme prescribed for his pupils, let such extra instruction receive a proper amount of additional salary. But I believe it will be found that the National Teachers of Ireland are unanimously and wisely against the introduction of “payment by results” into this country.

11.—As a whole, perhaps, payment of school fees is on the in-



crease; though in many localities it is stationary, and in many others, I believe it is on the decrease.

12.—Schools not National are on the decrease all around here. The reason is plain. Such schools, it was found, were fast losing the great portion of their attendance, and hence, much of their support. To balance this, they were put under the National Board, whose grants in salaries, requisites, &c., would compensate for the decrease of attendance. In many cases, such schools were taken on by the National Board, in direct contradiction to their own regulation, and hence, the unequal distribution, in part, referred to under question 1.

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## No. XXI.

1.—Sufficient. But we respectfully suggest that the Commissioners should again grant a small Triennial Free Stock of the most essential school requisites, such as a Map of the World, and one of Europe, a set of reading-tablets mounted on paste-board, a clock, and a few dozen ordinary class books, in all cases in which the Manager or Patron does not provide such things.

2.—They do not. The apathy or ignorance of many parents causes them to allow their children frequently to dawdle about their homes for weeks, during which, with very little inconvenience to themselves, these parents might have them at school. In most localities, there is no local influence used by those possessing it, to improve this state of things. (a) Not generally, though occasionally young children, whose parents are too poor to provide warm clothing for them, are kept at home in winter, when a school happens not to be quite near their residences. (b) Though this does not commonly cause irregularity of attendance, cases sometimes occur in which children stay at home for weeks, if asked for a single sixpence fees; and where weekly payments are made, though the amount is not more than a penny for each pupil, it is quite common to find children avoid attending at school on the day appointed for the payment of the penny! (c) This we believe rarely exists. (d) We hear nothing of this in these parts. (e) The poverty of small farmers, artizans, and labourers deprives them of the power, even if they had the will, to pay school fees; but schoolmasters rarely deny them the benefits of school instruction, if they wish to avail themselves of them.

3.—If the government salaries to male Teachers were fixed for the three classes, without sub-division, at about £75, £65, and £55 per annum—the salaries to females being something less—and these



rates of salary supplemented, say by an average of £15 per annum, to be supplied from a school tax imposed upon the lands and tenements of the whole country, according to the *ordnance valuation*, so as to render the position of the Teacher as respectable and independent as that of other public servants whose services are not more important to the public than his, he would feel as much more deeply interested in the faithful discharge of his duties, as the improvement in his position could reasonably demand. If, from the tax here recommended, a fund were established for granting small premiums to two classes of pupils, viz., those who exhibit the highest proficiency, and those, though naturally dull, who attend most regularly, the improved attendance on the part of the pupils, and increased attention of the Teachers would soon produce most desirable results. We would suggest, likewise, that Teachers, when relieved of the necessity of following various pursuits before and after school hours, should be required to make frequent visits to the homes of pupils who attend irregularly or neglect their home lessons, with the view of obtaining their parents' aid in convincing them of the necessity of renewed diligence, and fully explaining to them the various unhappy results that would in after life ensue from neglect of the benefits that might be derived from a good primary education. To excite a competition amongst the Teachers themselves, in improving their schools, we recommend that the average supplemental salary should be slightly increased or diminished according to results, without any regard to the Teacher's class. That school fees, as in the United States, be entirely dispensed with, except that any little amount obtained from the children of parents possessed of independent means might be added to the premium fund. The little premiums we believe should be given to the pupils two or three times a-year, to keep their attention.

4.—*Teachers, from their relation to the public, are unwilling to express their opinions in reply to this question.*

5.—Agricultural operations have the effect of diminishing the attendance at rural schools to an astonishing degree. Even the children of artizans in the country take part in them during the hurried seasons. For the most part, children of both sexes are removed from school while very young, say at from eleven to fourteen years of age. Some few occasionally return for five or six weeks in each of the two or three following years.

6.—The instruction given at National Schools is not wholly gratuitous, but the amounts received for school fees are in general so trifling as hardly to deserve notice. Some Managers do not allow their Teachers to charge any fees, though these Managers hardly ever contribute a farthing towards their Teachers' support. If school fees are to be at all demanded, we believe they should not



be expected from more than one-third of the pupils attending National Schools, and that these should be made to pay them in advance, to ensure regularity of attendance, for we regret to have to say that very often persons possessing good means are the most indifferent about the education of their children.

7.—Night Schools, if established during six months of the year in populous districts, would do some good, in affording to many working people, who could not remain a fair time at Day School, opportunities of improving the little imperfect knowledge they had previously acquired.

8.—The present system of inspection seems generally satisfactory, but would be more so if the Inspector's examinations were made half-yearly, and a few days' previous notice given the Teachers, that they might be able to invite as many as they could of their pupils to attend, so that the Inspectors might have a fair opportunity of judging the whole amount of work done since last inspection. The school accounts might be tested by the Inspector making a few incidental visits.

9.—Grant the Teacher a generous salary (as suggested in reply to query 3 above), to enable him to maintain himself and family in such a social condition as will command the respect and confidence both of his pupils and their parents, and give him cause to feel, even through ambitious motives, a real interest in the efficient discharge of his onerous duties. A supplemental salary, more or less according to results, as already suggested, would secure the best efforts of all the Teachers in this country.

10.—In determining the fixed salaries to Teachers, we believe that the qualification of the Teacher should be the chief criterion; but that the entire proficiency of the school should also be taken into account.

It is our firm conviction that payments wholly depending on results would have the effect in such a country as Ireland is, taking into account the poverty of the lower classes, of reducing popular education to a standard far below what it has been under the existing system.

No Teacher of our acquaintance would think of remaining in possession of an Irish School, while the general poverty prevalent amongst the classes whose children attend our schools continues to exist, if a purely result system of popular education be forced upon us. If the Government deem it expedient to introduce compulsory education in this country, then, and not till then, will we engage to produce as satisfactory results in our schools as the Teachers of any other popular schools under similar conditions.

12.—Christian Brothers' Schools appear to be on the increase, in large towns at least; but Hedge or Adventure Schools are almost extinct. Of other schools, there are scarcely any in these parts.



## No. XXII.

1.—Generally speaking, they are fairly sufficient; but many school-houses are ill adapted to their purpose, being cold and damp, the floors not boarded, and the walls unplastered, &c. The furniture and fixtures in many schools are deficient and unsuitable, and many are unprovided with a sufficient supply of maps and apparatus—so essential to the efficient working of a school—especially since the National Board withdrew their “Triennial Free Grants.” And as Managers and local parties, generally, fail to supply these necessary requisites, the Teacher is left to provide them from his own slender resources, a “feat” which it is almost as absurd to expect him to accomplish as “to gather wool in a goat house.”

2.—They do not. (a) We think not, as the number of schools, with few exceptions, is sufficient, and, in the immediate vicinity of schools, groups of children may often be seen idling during school hours. (b) Yes; for the children of the poorer classes require some inducement to encourage them to attend school rather than force them to pay fees; and many parents are quite reluctant to pay even One Penny per week for *some* of their children, as they imagine the Teacher is sufficiently paid by the “Board.” (c) We know of none. (d) We are not aware of any instance. (e) This is partially the case, especially as regards the children of labourers, cottiers, small farmers, and poor tradesmen, and these form the great majority of the attendance at National Schools. Poverty, apathy, and ignorance of the benefits which education confers, are among the other causes of neglect.

3.—The substitution of local taxation for school fees would, we believe, secure a more regular and far better attendance; as parents would then see they should pay this tax whether their children attended school or not. But we think a compulsory Act of Parliament should be passed obliging parents to send their children, between the ages of five and fourteen years, to school, for at least two-thirds of the school year. Should an educational tax be recommended to Parliament, we think a uniform rating should prevail throughout Ireland.

4.—*Virtually, the “Denominational System” exists in this part of the country, particularly in rural districts, nearly all the population being R. Catholic, so that we are unable to express an opinion as to the advantage or otherwise of the “Mixed System.”*

5.—The industrial occupations of spring and autumn cause the attendance to be exceedingly low at these periods of the year, especially at rural schools. These occupations act injuriously on the mental capabilities of the children, rendering the pupils slow and stupid, and quite indifferent to education; so that, what with



these effects, and the extreme irregularity of the attendance, it is almost impossible for a Teacher to advance the pupils satisfactorily, even in the more elementary and most essential branches of education, viz., reading, writing, and arithmetic.

6.—The instruction is not usually gratuitous, but a great number of children must be admitted free, in order that the Teacher may keep up the average required by the National Board for his class. This rule of the Board regarding averages operates most injuriously on the poor Teacher, and is also most unjust to him, as it requires him to be responsible for circumstances over which he has not the slightest control. It should, therefore, be rescinded as soon as possible.

7.—Night Schools might be advantageous, particularly during the winter months. However, in the absence of a compulsory Act of Parliament, the establishment of Night Schools would probably have an injurious effect on the attendance at Day Schools; as parents might then keep their children employed during the day, and send them to school at night. We think it should not be compulsory on any Teacher to conduct a Night School, as, from the exhausting effects of teaching, many Teachers would be quite unable to attend to night pupils, after their day's work of drudgery.

9.—The only practicable plan is to augment very considerably the present miserable salaries, by increasing the Parliamentary grant for education, and by imposing an educational tax in lieu of school fees; and we are firmly convinced that, until the average salaries of the National Teachers is at least doubled, no system of education, however admirable in theory, can increase the efficiency of the National Schools.

Liberal retiring allowances should also be provided for Teachers incapacitated by old age or infirmity; for how can any Teacher, with the grim walls of a prison workhouse looming in the distance, be expected to devote his whole time and attention to his duties?

The despotic power of peremptory dismissal possessed by Managers should be withdrawn, free residences should be provided for Teachers, and many minor grievances redressed.

Should such measures be adopted by Parliament, there is no doubt but a flourishing and an efficient system of education will soon permeate the land.

10.—Classification should be the basis of salary, as it implies personal ability, adaptation for teaching, industry, and proficiency of pupils; for no Teacher, not possessing these qualifications, will be recommended for promotion by the Inspectors.

11.—School fees and local contributions are on the decline; in fact, local contribution is a rarity in this part of the country, and school fees are merely nominal.

12.—Non-National Schools are on the decline.



## No. XXIII.

1.—Schools attended by poor children should be supplied with school requisites gratis.

2.—No. (a) No. (b) No. (c) No. (d) No. (e) Yes. (f) Ignorance and carelessness of parents.

3.—Compulsory education, or prizes for those children who attend more than 200 days in the year.

4.—*We think this is a question to which Teachers should not give a reply.*

5.—In farming districts, the average age of children attending school scarcely ever exceeds eight, and, consequently, the amount of education received is very trifling. This is owing to the increased value of farm labour.

6.—Nominally, no; but to a great extent really gratuitous. School fees should be imposed according to class and circumstances of parents. We find that those children who pay most attend best.

7.—None of the members of this Association have any experience in Night Schools.

8.—Yes.

9.—Increase the salary and raise the standard of proficiency.

10.—If the late rule with regard to averages were repealed, the present system of classification is the best we know of. The decrease of population and the multiplicity of schools have made it impossible for the Result System to remunerate the Teacher. It would be injurious to the Teacher and detrimental to the cause of education.

11.—School fees are on the decrease, and local contributions almost unknown in this place.

12.—Schools not National are on the decrease.

## No. XXIV.

I delayed replying to queries, that I might have the opinion of the other Associations of the county.

1.—Yes, with very few exceptions, schools are sufficiently numerous in this part of the country.

2.—They do not. (a) No. (b) No. (c) No. (d) No. (e) Yes; they keep the children from school during the spring and autumn, to assist them in their farming operations, and thereby avoid hiring labourers. (f) Carelessness on the part of parents, and, in many instances, inability to clothe the children in a suitable way, to attend school.

3.—We consider that a stricter enforcement of the payment of



school fees, and every grade to pay in proportion to their means, and also to make no allowance for absent time, would make the attendance more regular. In these matters, the Managers usually interfere, and prevent the Teachers charging fees. It is a great source of misunderstanding between Teachers and Managers.

4.—*We have no opportunity of judging, there being only one denomination in this locality, with very few exceptions.*

5.—Almost the only industrial occupation in this neighbourhood is agriculture, and the effect on school attendance is to make it irregular.

Pupils generally commence attending school about six, and withdraw at about fourteen years of age, during which time the attendance is quite irregular.

6.—About one-third are free, and in some cases there are no school fees allowed by Managers. The Teachers are powerless when the Managers object. School fees should be charged in every case, to vary according to the means of the parents. This was the original rule of the Commissioners of Education, though never to my knowledge enforced.

7.—Night Schools would be useful in towns, or where persons removed from school at an early age, after receiving a partial education, would avail themselves of the opportunity.

8.—Quite sufficient.

9.—By increasing their salaries from the state, or by local contributions. We doubt if the latter means will ever materially increase the Teacher's income; the people are generally too poor to contribute much, and the landed proprietors are, as a rule, unwilling to do so; therefore, nearly our whole dependence is on the state. If Teachers were fairly remunerated, and secured from want when incapacitated by age or declining health, men of high attainments would join their ranks, and the standard of education in this country be raised.

10.—Classification of Teachers and proficiency of pupils are sufficient bases for the regulation of salaries—the first, to induce a Teacher to attain literary qualification, and the second, to secure careful attention to his school. Attendance is a local matter, and in many instances does not depend on either the ability or assiduity of the Teacher.

11.—Payment of school fees is stationary.

12.—Schools not National are on the decline.

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No. XXV.

1.—The schools are sufficiently numerous; but the teaching is often inefficient, owing to the want of Assistant Teachers and



Monitors. The abolition of the Triennial Grant of Free Stock has been detrimental to the cause of education, as many schools are in sad need of books and apparatus. The parents of many of the children are unable to buy the books, even though so cheap. When the children of the poorer classes are so far educated as to have acquired a taste for the acquisition of knowledge, there is a great obstacle in the way of acquiring such knowledge, viz., the want of literary and scientific works, which a public lending library established by the state might supply.

2.—They do not. (a) No; the schools are sufficiently near all. (b) Nor to school fees; the Teacher receives little or nothing from the poorer classes for school fees. (c) This rarely occurs. (d) We know of no such case. (e) Very often; indeed, this may be regarded as the main reason; but (f) there are others, such as, want of appreciation of the value of education by parents, carelessness, and a repulsion to sending out the children badly clothed.

3.—The clergy of the different denominations might do a good deal in this way, by continually bringing before the parents the benefits of education, and also seeing that the children attend school. Where the parents are not in poverty, a system of compulsory education will alone attain the object in view. As to the poorer classes, it is difficult to devise any plan, but the employers of the children might be compelled to allow them half-time, say, at school.

4.—*Most beneficial. The popular feeling is decidedly in its favour.*

5.—Agricultural operations tend to thin the attendance. The children of farmers and labourers attend badly, and leave school permanently at an early age.

6.—Teachers seldom recover more than one half of school fees charged, so that the majority of pupils are taught gratuitously. As an instance, an Inspector, late of this district, told a gentleman in this neighbourhood he knew an efficient Teacher who lived among wealthy farmers, who had their children attending his school, and his school fees for the year amounted to the sum of 10s.! The Model School charges should be enforced. Teachers to be prohibited from lowering these charges. In some districts, the schools are so numerous, that the Teachers lower their charges, so as to try to keep up the average required for their class, as many parents send their children to schools where they will be charged little or nothing. Where children are very poor, the Commissioners to pay the Teacher for them.

7.—If the Board would give greater encouragement to Teachers of Night Schools, much good might be effected. Many Teachers might have large Evening Schools, but decline to open them, as the remuneration is so poor.



8.—The Inspector's duties are so heavy, he has not sufficient time to test the knowledge of the children. This might be partially remedied by having only two examinations in the year, and he would thus be enabled to *examine* more closely, and have some time still for making incidental visits.

9.—Give the Teacher something like a fair remuneration for his services, and a pension when he is incapacitated from old age or infirmity, or, in justice, after a certain number of years' service, and we think "increase in the efficiency of the schools" will follow as a natural result from improving the Teacher's position: as, the fact is, the schools will not be efficient unless clever men conduct them, and these will not be so apt to leave the service as they are doing if they are properly paid and have a pension in prospect. The Teacher's calling should also have more the character of a profession. The majority of Teachers are Teachers by accident; few on entering on the profession do so from choice. The situation is too easily obtained. Any one with but a very elementary education may obtain a school when he may choose. Let the Board, then, give us something like a salary; let no Teacher be appointed who has not only, in the first place, received a sound education, but also a thorough training for the proper discharge of the duties of his profession—that is, let him be *taught how to teach*, and the business is likely not only to attract clever young persons, but also to retain them when it has them. We don't mean to say that the Board has not a great many clever Teachers, but we should shortly have them *all* that, were the above suggestions carried out.

Another means of improving the Teacher's position is, that he should be very well informed. Many Teachers confine themselves to the Board's books for acquiring knowledge, and the consequence is that they are not able to acquit themselves in the world as men of learning should. It is very much to be desired, that Teachers should be better supplied with books, such as the English classic authors, histories, &c., but with their limited means they are unable to purchase them. One would think the Board could as easily supply these Books at a cheap rate as the ordinary school books.

10.—Salaries should be based on the classification of the Teacher, combined with proficiency of scholars. Payments by result would be unfair in principle, unfitted for any country, much less this one, and would be disastrous to the cause of education. We endorse the opinions of the Dublin Association, in answer to this query.

11.—Payment of school fees, stationary. Local contributions on the decrease.

12.—Schools not National on the decrease.



## XXVI.

Before replying to the queries, the Association thinks it right to give a description of the district it represents, and of the industrial pursuits and means of livelihood of its inhabitants, as a key to the better understanding of the replies.

The district which the Rosses National Teachers' Association represents is a peninsula, with a number of islands off its coast, and comprises the Parish of Templecrone, or the Rosses, and the Parish of Lettermacaward. The mainland portion is nearly insulated by the ocean, which bounds it on the north, west, and south, and by the estuaries, Gweedore and Gweebarrow, which almost meet on its east. It is deeply indented by the ocean, which gives it a long shore line, and gives Templecrone the name Rosses (signifying headlands), by which it is most generally and familiarly known. A great portion of it is covered with mountains, which, in some places, run in chains, intersecting it into valleys, and, in not a few cases, rise in large mounds, here and there, in very picturesque disorder.

The soil is bog of the most barren and ungenerous kind, with some few exceptions in Lettermacaward, where there are scraps of clay and sand soil; but even this, as its name, *letter* (half-land, or elevated swamp, or morass), implies, is chiefly bog.

The mainland has a riband along the shore, cultivated and thickly inhabited, while all the islands have a dense population. In the mountainous parts, there are, here and there, cultivated spots occupied by very much isolated clusters of families, that have neither the advantage of highway nor boreen to connect them with the rest of the inhabitants of the district, or to afford them a means of conveying their crops to mill or market. These hardy people have to carry on their backs, across the bogs for several miles, any produce of their farms they have to dispose of, or any commodities which they have to bring to their homes.

The people are chiefly small farmers, but in few cases do they depend entirely on their farms for their livelihood. A few fish; some devote a portion of summer to the manufacture of kelp, and, out of about 2000 families in the district, 1000 members, at least, go every year, after the sowing of the crops, to Scotland, for periods averaging from six weeks to four months, to labour at the sea-port docks, railways, and other public works, and at the harvest; and, of the boys of the district, from nine to fifteen years old, 600, at the lowest calculation, are hired to herd cattle from May to November each year, at distances varying from 30 to 50 miles from their homes. The females, all who are able to handle the knitting needle, are employed at making socks and stockings, at 1½d. to 1½d.



per pair, for the former, and 4d. to 6d. per pair for the latter, being supplied with machine-made yarn by agents employed by Scotch firms.

From this statement you will be able to appreciate the peculiar difficulties that beset the spread of education in this district, and harass and counteract the most strenuous efforts of the Teacher.

1.—No. The means for educating the people of this district are supplied by the Parliamentary Grant administered by the Board of Education, and from the Robinson and Church Missionary School Funds, and are not adequate to their efficient education; inasmuch as they are not sufficient to remunerate fairly the Teacher, or to supply suitable school-houses, properly furnished with educational appliances, without which no system of education can be effectively worked.

There are nineteen National Schools, one Robinson, and one Church Mission School, but *seven* others are required to bring education within the reach of the whole population.

The people of the localities excluded from the advantages of schools are exceedingly anxious to have them established amongst them; and no doubt the Commissioners of Education would grant them the usual aid, but from the opposition in five cases—not an opposition to any particular system, but to education in general—from a quarter to which allusion only can be made here, the wishes of the people, in this respect, are unsatisfied, their portion of the public funds debarred from flowing in its destined channel to their advantage, and a large number of youth brought up in ignorance, notwithstanding the laudable efforts of their parents to have Hedge Schools for them during the winter.

2.—No. The people evince the greatest anxiety to have schools established among them, but once they are established, they do not avail themselves of them to the extent they might. (a) Several hundred children are deprived of the benefits of school education, owing to their distance from any school now established, notwithstanding the anxiety of their parents on the subject (see reply to query 1.) (b) The school fees in this district are, it may be said, *nil*, and, therefore, in nowise cause children to absent themselves from school. (c) In one case only has it fallen under the notice of this Association, that absence from school of a number of children is attributable to “want of confidence in the Teacher,” and this is a case where a lad of barely sufficient qualifications to rank as probationer, has succeeded an intelligent and successful Teacher who relinquished teaching for a more lucrative appointment. (d) This Association is not aware of a single instance where absence of a single child from a National School was caused by any religious scruple whatever. (e) From the statement preceding these replies, it will be seen that the poverty of the parents affects the school



attendance very materially; but this Association thinks that it would not prevent any children within its district from schooling enough to enable them to read, write, and cast up little accounts. (*f*) Many, very many, of the children, who, in the opinion of this Association, have had sufficient opportunity, after making every allowance for obstacles they could not control, to acquire the amount of knowledge specified under (*e*) remain quite illiterate, although, too, that their names have appeared on school rolls, and been returned in public records as sharing in the benefits of the education which the state provides for the people. The neglect to which this unhappy result is attributable is not owing to an indifference to education, as some have asserted, but to a habit of procrastination—a habit which influences them in common with a large number of their countrymen, in many of their pursuits and undertakings—a habit which it should be an object of the educator to eradicate. They say to themselves, when a school is in their vicinity, and always open to them, without any sacrifice of time or money, “There is time enough to acquire all the learning my children want.” The attendance at school is, under these circumstances, interfered with on the most trivial cause, the children lose interest in their lessons, and time passes *on*, till at last the opportunity of getting taught has slipped away entirely.

3.—Under circumstances such as this Association has to deal with—and they are exceptionally difficult, as so many of the children leave their homes to hire during six months every year, so many being engaged to supply the place of the members of the families who cross to Scotland (see preliminary observations), in attending during summer on the crops, and so many being engaged in herding cattle at home, an employment which occupies a large proportion of the children, as much of the grazing is on unfenced scraps between the plots of tillage—the securing of a better attendance of the pupils is the greatest difficulty of the Teacher. Indeed, the absence of many for large portions of the year, while the social condition of the people remains as it is, is a necessity which is to be regretted but cannot be helped.

But the absences which arise from the procrastinating habit, referred to under (*f*), query 2, may be remedied with less or more success. In this district, where there is no middle class, no resident gentry, and an absentee proprietary that takes no interest in educating the people, and gives no encouragement to schools, the counteracting agency to this habit must be the Teacher alone. Frequent visits by him to the homes of the children to promote a taste for education, and to remonstrate with parents who detain children from school on every trivial cause, seems to be the most effectual course to secure good attendance. There is, however, one great obstacle to its being pursued energetically, namely, the in-



adequate salaries of the Teachers. While paid as they are, most of them are obliged to devote their spare hours to some employment, to supplement their professional incomes, and, of course, have no time for this useful work.

It might have a beneficial effect in securing better attendance, if pupils, absent for six weeks, instead of thirteen, should be struck off the rolls, and that a small fee should be charged for the re-registering of the name. A member of this Association charges a fee for re-registering, and the plan promises to work well, though the people clamour a little at the innovation, as they term it.

4.—*This Association, considering its members to be but instruments of education, deems it more prudent to abstain from entering on the discussed question of different systems. It has, however, no hesitation to state that the popular feeling in this locality—so far as any expression of it has been manifested—is not averse to the present system of National education, which has, undoubtedly, produced many beneficial results to the public at large, and to individuals.*

The freedom from crime acknowledged by judges on circuit, which characterises the country, is a proof of the beneficial result to the public. Apropos of this, a few years ago, an illegal society, Molly Maguirism, made its way into this district, causing much annoyance and disturbance; and it is the pride of this Association to have to state the *marked absence from all connection with this society of any of the pupils of National Schools whose period of schooling might be expected to have any influence on the formation of their character.*

Besides, several young men, sons of these small farmers described in the preliminary observations to these replies, have obtained situations in the Excise, as gaugers, in the Customs, as clerks, in the Board of Trade, as light-keepers, &c. &c. Some have acquired places of trust in mercantile establishments, and not a few of those who have emigrated to America and Australia are now in positions of respectability, and on the way of becoming independent in their adopted countries, all owing to the blessing of the education brought within their reach by the state.

6.—Almost gratuitous. A few children pay a trifle, but the great bulk of the pupils are free. Owing to the humble and straitened circumstances of the people of this district, the Association could not recommend the exacting of fees beyond a nominal amount, to be fixed by the Manager and Teacher annually. Fees to some amount should be insisted on, for gratuitous instruction, like eleemosynary aid of any kind, has a demoralizing effect, destroys self-reliance, and that laudable pride which glories in being indebted to one's own exertions, under Providence, for all his enjoyments. Besides, what is paid for is more valued and cared for, and, in cases of schools, likely to beget among the people a deeper



interest in their welfare, and to promote a more regular attendance of pupils.

8.—The Association presumes it is not expected of Teachers to offer an opinion as to this query. It begs, however, to remark that one great cause of annoyance to Schoolmasters in connection with inspection, is want of uniformity in the suggestions left in the Observation Book for their guidance, as regards modes of teaching, system of writing, arrangement of furniture, construction of time tables, and the like. Each Inspector has his own hobby on one or all of these points, and unless the Teacher adopts it, he loses favour and meets, or fancies, at least, that he meets, with provoking little persecutions.

9.—The professional income of the Teacher should be such as to enable him to maintain, without recourse to any other business or employment, the social position to which he is entitled; and thus render him contented, lessen the desires for changing to some other service, and enable him to devote his whole time and energies to the work of his school.

The first practical means, therefore, of improving the position of the Teacher, and rendering the schools efficient, is to considerably augment the present class salaries, and thereby encourage a better class of persons to engage in the work of teaching, and hold in the service the more active and intelligent class, who, under present circumstances, are continually looking out for some other employment and opportunity to abandon schoolkeeping.

A second practical means to attain these objects is to limit the field from which candidates are chosen to a more select class, by raising the standard of qualifications, and recognizing no one as Teacher without a certificate of classification from a Board of Inspectors. There are two opportunities every year in each district, and they might be increased to four, to procure such a certificate, so that it would not impose a great inconvenience on any candidate to demand this evidence of fitness for the office he aspires to. What Dispensary Relief Committee would appoint as their medical officer any one who could not produce a diploma? And, surely, not less caution should be exercised in the selection of one who has to operate on the moral and intellectual faculties, than of one who deals with the body only.

Should, however, a Manager appoint a person to the charge of a school, who had not this certificate—and this Association would leave him that power—such person should be allowed no salary till classed, and then to be paid from date of classification only. This would prevent the evil which in more than one case has existed in this district, of having a school in charge of a person who for years is unable to obtain a class. It would also be a stimulus for exertion to paid monitors, and, in many ways, contribute to the efficiency of schools.



10.—This Association would much deprecate the basing of salaries on results only. In manual employments, the principle seems fair to regulate the wages by the labour: "A fair day's work, a fair day's wages," has grown into an acknowledged truism. And, if the work of education consisted merely in giving a little mechanical expertness in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other elementary subjects, the principle might, perhaps, be fairly enough applied to measuring the salary of a Teacher. But the work of the educator is more than this: it is to mould the mind and the heart, and to give to the aspirations of the young a salutary direction—in short, it is not only to fit them for the business of this world, but to train them for the due performance of the duties of life. Labours of this description cannot be measured, and hence the salaries of Teachers should not depend on results alone.

Furthermore, if the plan could be managed so as to work fairly as regards the Teacher, it is to be feared it would work very injuriously as regards two classes of children—the slow or stupid ones, and those who could not make the required number of attendances in the year. The Teacher, expecting no payment for these, would, it is natural to suppose, neglect them to attend to those by whom he expected reward. On these grounds, also, payment by results alone seems objectionable.

The income of the Teacher should consist of class salary—which should in every case, unless through dereliction of duty, be guaranteed—and of further emoluments to depend on the state of the school, including proficiency and attendance. It is not deemed necessary, as this paper has grown so long, to support this suggestion in detail. Its reasonableness, however, will, it is hoped, commend itself to consideration.

11.—Decreasing. The Teachers, fearing a reduction in the class salaries, owing to the rule of averages, are, in some cases, constrained to be less exacting in this respect than they formerly had been.

12.—Not on the increase. A Robinson's School and another Protestant Church School, have existed in this locality from a period long antecedent to the establishment of National Schools, and they are the only regular schools not National.

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No. XXVII.

1.—Yes.

2.—No. (*a, b, c, d,*) No. (*e*) This is the great cause. (*f*) Ignorance of parents, and their incapability of setting a due value on the knowledge received at National Schools.



3.—Premiums might be used advantageously in some cases, but nothing short of compulsory attendance will have the effect of making the attendance equal to what is desired.

5.—Agricultural operations cause the attendance to fall below the average in spring and autumn.

6.—Though not intended to be gratuitous, it is often made so by the parents, and the Teachers dislike to have recourse to law.

7.—None.

8.—Quite sufficient.

9.—Increase of salaries, with pensions.

10.—On classification, and on the proficiency of the pupils.

11.—On the decrease.

12.—Not on the increase.

## No. XXVIII.

### DUBLIN CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.

1.—Quite sufficient; but there are two great obstacles in the way of their efficiency, namely, in large schools no provision is made, except in rare cases, for a salary to an Assistant; and in nearly all schools there is a want of maps, charts, and apparatus so useful to the Teacher in educating his pupils. There was formerly a Triennial Free Stock granted to each school, but some years ago this was withdrawn, and, as a general rule, the local parties have done nothing to obtain those requisites, so that the Teacher must either provide them himself or do without them.

2.—They do not. Poverty is one of the great causes, but apathy, negligence, and we may add ignorance of the many benefits which education confers, also prevail. (a) We should think not, in most cases they are sufficiently near. (b) No; for very few Teachers would debar a child from the benefits of instruction, if appreciated by the parents. (c) We know of none. (d) Neither do we know of any such instance. (e) This is universally true, especially as regards the children of labourers and small farmers, and these classes form the great bulk of the population for whom National Schools were intended.

3.—While the social condition of the country remains as it is, the poverty of the people will render it difficult to make the attendance of children more regular at school. Something might be done by a well-regulated system of rewards to pupils who would make a certain number of attendances. In cities and towns, however, nothing short of compulsory attendance will ever induce the vast majority of the children to attend school.

4.—*This is a question to which Teachers, from their position, should not be expected to reply.*



5.—Agricultural operations cause the attendance in rural districts to be irregular in the spring and autumn—the children of the labouring classes being then withdrawn to assist their parents. Children are withdrawn permanently from school at a very early age: in cities and towns, as soon as they can act as messengers or in any other capacity, and in the country, when they are able to earn anything for their parents. We have no views derived from practical experience to offer regarding the operation of the Factory Regulations' Act.

6.—When the average annual amount paid in the shape of *school fees and local contributions* is as low as 1s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pupil, in the County Longford, for the year 1867, and the average per pupil for all Ireland from the same sources is but 3s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. (and in this estimate Model Schools are included, in which payment is compulsory and the rates higher than in ordinary National Schools), education may be looked upon as almost gratuitous. We consider that, owing to the various causes before mentioned, the Teacher cannot compulsorily impose school fees without depriving of the benefits of education many now enjoying it.

8.—The system of inspection carried out by the National Board is, in our opinion, very efficient as it stands. As practical Teachers, however, we would venture to offer a few suggestions on this point. At present, the Inspector visits and examines the schools three times a year as a rule. We believe that twice a year would be quite often enough to *examine*; the Inspectors could spend the time thus saved in making incidental visits to such schools as he thought proper. The supervision would thus be more perfect, and the examinations would not be too far apart.

9.—The best and most practicable means of improving the Teachers' position, and at the same time increasing the efficiency of their schools, is to largely increase the present wretched class salaries, and grant retiring pensions to those who, through old age or ill health, become unable to follow their avocations. The adoption of this course would increase the efficiency of the schools, by supplying the Teacher with a motive to work diligently and faithfully. At present, too many of the most efficient Teachers are only anxious to fly altogether from the service of the Board, for in any other occupation requiring education, they can earn much more. Of course it is easy to see that a feeling of discontent with his position necessarily influences the Teacher in his application to his business; but increase the salaries and grant retiring pensions, and the same Teacher who was before discontented will become an energetic worker, for he has a stake in the country which he will not negligently throw away.

10.—The amount of salary payable to Teachers should depend on their own classification according to their scholastic acquire-



ments, combined with the proficiency of their pupils. As much misconception prevails upon this point, we deem it necessary to enter somewhat into details in support of our views. It will be admitted as an axiom that any system of payment which is unjust to the Teacher is to be deprecated for two reasons : in the first place, because of its injustice, and, in the second, because any such system is certain to be ultimately detrimental to the cause of education. It is, we presume, the object of the state, when establishing a system of National Education in any country, to place in every locality a school, conducted in such a manner that all the children residing in that locality may have there imparted to them such an amount of education as their respective capacities and circumstances qualify them to receive. The question is, how may this be best effected ? To provide a properly qualified Teacher is evidently the first and most important desideratum. It seems absurd to argue that such a Teacher should give proof of his fitness for his office by passing whatever kind of examination should be deemed most suitable. Other qualifications besides mere scholarship are, of course, indispensable in a Teacher, and it is true that such qualifications cannot be ascertained by a literary or scientific examination. But is this a reason why a qualification which *can* be so discovered should not be insisted on ? The fact that a man possesses knowledge himself, and is able to exhibit the possession of it, is so far a proof that he is qualified to impart it to others. Education expands the mind, and enables the individual gifted with it to use his faculties to the best advantage in the discharge of his daily duties. In persons seeking employment—clerks, engineers, mechanics, nay, even the labourers in the government dockyards—proof of education is considered as a proof, in a certain degree, of their fitness for such employments ; why it should not be so considered regarding the office of Teacher, we must confess we are unable to comprehend. We do not see how it can be disputed that, other things being equal, the man who has the highest amount of education makes the best Teacher. We should be ashamed to enter at such length upon this topic were it not that contrary opinions have been loudly advanced of late. Some mode of classifying Teachers, with regard to their mental qualifications, is therefore absolutely necessary in any rational system of education. The mischief which would result from doing away with such classification is too palpable to be here dwelt upon ; suffice it to say, its worst effects would not be perceptible until it had worked the greatest of evils. But as a Teacher might have high mental qualifications, and yet from inability to impart information properly, indolence, or other causes, may make an indifferent Schoolmaster, therefore the proficiency of the pupils in his school must also be taken into account when estimating the payment which should be accorded to him for his services. So far



we believe we have the assent of all intelligent persons ; but with regard to the last point a diversity of opinion arises. For a long time it was never doubted that a searching examination two or three times a year, with power vested in the examiners to inflict punishment or give rewards, was a sufficiently satisfactory mode of estimating a Teacher's work, and of giving him his just deserts. Of late years this has been doubted by some, nor is it difficult to assign the cause. It was seen that, although schools were planted within a reasonable distance of every family throughout nearly the whole of Ireland, yet many did not avail themselves of their advantages ; this was commented on and complained of, and, as the speediest mode of accounting for the fact, the Teachers were saddled with the blame. All sorts of schemes, therefore, have been propounded of late, having for the most part the object of forcing the Teachers to get into their Schools, *per fas aut nefas*, all the children of their localities, and to punish them should they fail in doing so. The Teacher was to be compelled, in a word, to discharge not only his own duty, but the duties of all those who are bound to assist him in giving proper effect to his labours. We trust we shall be heard with attention whilst we state with moderation the Teacher's case. He is, let us suppose, in charge of a school in a certain locality. He is employed by the Government, who have thought it necessary to establish or countenance a school in that locality. What may reasonably be expected of him in such a position ? He must attend in his school a certain number of hours daily, and during these hours he must labour earnestly and skilfully in the discharge of his disagreeable and onerous duties. Outside the school hours, he must prepare himself by note-taking, preparation of lessons, &c., for their proper fulfilment. Should he do all this, and should an inspection, searching and intelligent, taking into account all the circumstances of his school, prove him to have succeeded in his task, we maintain he is entitled to an adequate payment, irrespective of everything else. If the circumstances of every school were exactly alike, then might it be reasonable to fix some certain standard to be universally applied in the payment of Teachers ; but it is well known that the circumstances of schools differ as widely as their localities. One Teacher in a crowded city has 100 pupils in daily attendance ; he has Assistants to help him in instructing them ; another Teacher, in a sparsely populated rural district, has only 40 ; yet both may labour with equal diligence, and give equal time to the discharge of their duties ; is it reasonable then that one should receive only two-fifths as much payment as the other ? The Teacher of a largely attended school generally receives more payment, in the shape of school fees and other local emoluments, than the Teacher of one with a small attendance, even should both labour with equal zeal and skill. This is unavoidable ; but is the State to



still further increase this anomaly by adopting the system of payment by results? If an employer send two labourers to dig two separate pieces of ground, and that one finds the land soft and friable, while the other finds his portion strong and hard—is each to be paid according to the amount of earth turned up? If they were so paid, it would be manifestly a rank injustice. Yet this is exactly parallel to what would result if what is commonly understood as the system of payment by results be introduced into Irish National Schools. The fact is, the adoption of any system similar in features to that which prevails in England would be the grossest injustice to the Irish National Teacher, by making him responsible for all the social anomalies of his country. If squalid poverty, apathetic ignorance, and the habits which generally attend these social monsters, render the attendance in his school irregular; if emigration and the other social changes now in progress in this country render it small; why should the Teacher be the sufferer? Is it not enough that he gives his entire time, his best energies, often his very life, to the discharge of his duties? Is all to be of no avail unless he accomplishes impossibilities or miracles? The Commissioners of Education have multiplied schools through the length and breadth of a land whose population is daily diminishing; their having done so will prove, instead of a blessing, a curse, if the Teachers are to suffer, as they undoubtedly will, by the adoption of any system of payment which depends immediately upon attendance. Besides its injustice to the Teachers, such a system will undoubtedly fail to secure its intended objects. By paying only for pupils who pass in certain subjects, after having made a certain number of attendances, it is made the Teacher's interest to neglect all who are likely to fail in attaining the prescribed conditions. Among these latter will be found the poorest and the dullest children, those who, from their parents' poverty or neglect, attend most irregularly; in a word, all those for whom State aid is most imperatively required. Thus the adoption of a system of payment by results will intensify the evils it is designed to redress. With compulsory education the law of the land, so many bad effects would not result, but of such a measure we hear not a word. We repeat, the only mode of payment which will be alike just to the Teachers and beneficial to the interests of education generally, is one which depends on the Teacher's qualifications, and the Inspector's report upon his actual efficiency in his school. If the latter cannot be depended on, it must be from the Inspector's unfitness for his office, and we ask how will this be remedied by giving him still more responsible duties to perform? In any contemplated system of payment by results, it is evidently upon his recommendation that salary is to be paid. It may be said that the Teacher is at present too careless of the public opinion in his locality; we answer that his dependence upon his



Manager, and the interest which he at present has in pleasing the parents of his pupils, make that opinion operate upon him most beneficially, though not unduly. He is at present the servant of the social community where he resides; the adoption of the system of payment by results would render him its slave; and we all know what slave labour is worth. The evils arising from irregular attendance are not to be cured by punishing the Teacher. Other and remedial measures should be adopted; and it would be more rational, and more likely to be attended with beneficial results, if an attempt were made to investigate the real sources of this modern educational defect, with a view to the application of the necessary correctives. Some educationists have supposed that the adoption of a system of payment by results would be attended with this advantage, viz., that the attention of both Teacher and pupils might thereby be better directed to the fundamental branches of education, to the exclusion of the unnecessary or less useful ones. To this we answer, that all improvements in this direction can be effected in a much simpler, and at least an equally efficacious manner. A circular from the office in Marlboro' Street to the Managers and Inspectors of Irish National Schools will introduce in a month any change which may be deemed advantageous. Should grammar and geography be deemed useless appendages to the programme of any of the classes, they can be struck off at almost a moment's notice, or an additional amount of attention ordered to writing or arithmetic. And much benefit may be derived from increased attention to these technical portions of educational science, more than can ensue from the adoption of violent and injurious changes. The Teachers of Ireland have no ridiculous pretensions in this respect; they are willing to work with all their might in the sacred cause in which they are engaged, and in whatever manner may be deemed most advisable by their superiors. All they ask in return is that they may not be held responsible for circumstances over which they have no control, and that they should receive what is their due, namely, fair wages for good work. We have not here dwelt upon what is undoubtedly well worthy of attention, viz., the breach of faith which is involved in first inciting men to struggle to attain high classification, and then taking away the payment attached to such classification. The Irish National Teachers are, unfortunately, in such a position that they cannot, individually or collectively, offer effectual resistance to any plan, no matter how inimical to their interests; they must helplessly endure whatever evils are inflicted upon them. Yet this helplessness has in it a certain strength: it enlists in their behalf the sympathies of all benevolent minds, and will arouse the best efforts of those whose delight it is to assist the weak and oppressed.

11.—Our experience is that local contributions and school fees



are on the decrease. A reference to the late reports of the Commissioners of National Education will confirm this.

12.—In Dublin and the large provincial towns the schools of the Christian Brothers are on the increase, but Private or Adventure Schools are every day becoming rarer.

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Nos. XXIX to XLVIII.

The Associations numbered as above have informed me, through their Secretaries, that they adopt the preceding reply, No. XXVIII.

Those numbered as follows endorse the same replies, with the following additional remarks.

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No. XLIX.

On behalf of this Society, I beg leave to state that they fully endorse the replies given by the Central Association. *With regard to query No. 4, they do not regard themselves competent to give a reply, the population of the locality not being mixed. The experience of the Teachers trained at the Central Model School with respect to the fraternization of Teachers of different creeds, would lead them to pronounce in favour of the Mixed System, as far as the Teachers themselves are concerned. The Teachers are afraid to speak out on the question, for reasons best known to themselves.*

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No. L.

*They consider the present Mixed System as truly beneficial, and in fact the only system at all practicable, because children are thus brought into contact and cultivate friendly feelings towards each other, which otherwise would not be the case.*

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No. LI.

We would add that education should be made compulsory for all children between the ages of six and thirteen. *To the query on Mixed Education we cannot venture an answer, as we cannot submit an opinion which might clash with that of the R. C. Bishops and Clergymen who are agitating for the Denominational System.*

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No. LII.

*Our experience is that it has worked well, and the popular feeling would be decidedly in its favour were it not that clerical interference frequently steps in to mar the harmony that would otherwise prevail. In our district the National Schools are principally under the management of the R. C. Clergymen, and this circumstance gives rise to the opposition of Clergymen of other persuasions, without their ever inquiring into the nature of the instruction given, or the rules by which the Teacher is guided.*

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No. LIII.

*With regard to the Factory Act :—from our experience, we find the Act is frequently abused by children not attending school as prescribed. In many instances, parents get the Attendance Book signed and filled by parties who have no school, nor are Teachers in any place. A more careful supervision would be required to carry out the Act in its integrity.*

*As Teachers, we do not consider it judicious to express any opinion on query 4.*

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No. LIV.

*The whole of them agreed, if query No. 4 were to be answered at all, that the Denominational System is the best, and that the popular feeling in this part of the country is in favour of it.*

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No. LV.

*It was the opinion of the Meeting that the Mixed System is highly beneficial, and, so far as the members know, the popular feeling is in favour of it.*

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No. LVI.

*Their reply to query No. 4 is in the affirmative.*

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## No. LVII.

*At a full Meeting of our Association last Saturday they expressed themselves in favour of the Mixed System, as they had reason to know from experience that it was productive of much good, by drawing together in friendly intercourse youths of different creeds and classes who would otherwise grow up estranged by prejudiced views, a state of things which has long been the bane of this distracted country. They think at this important crisis, when the race is being run for "religious equality," and a fair prospect of having the "apple of discord" removed, the time has nearly arrived when children and men of different denominations can grow up together, without allowing a difference in religious belief to mar their good understanding, and in such an event the Mixed System of education will be all the more beneficial.*

*As regards the popular feeling on the subject, we believe the R. Catholics would prefer a separate system if the Government would only grant it, but whether such a system would be the most beneficial is another question. Of course you will understand us to speak only from our knowledge of this district, and just what has come under our own notice.*

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## No. LVIII.

I am directed to inform you that the answers given by the Dublin Association were considered highly satisfactory and to the point at the last meeting. *The Association, however, thinks that the mixture of Protestants and R. Catholics in the same school is found to work well.*

My own opinion is that the admixture of the religious elements in the attendance of any well conducted school is not only not injurious but highly beneficial to the rising generation, as they go into the world with broader ideas and greater friendship towards each other. Of course I give this opinion privately, and so does the Association, as to put it before the public with the present *absolute*, and I must say often *abused*, power of Managers would be death as far as situations are concerned.

The Association requested me to urge on you, in behalf of the teaching body and for the benefit of education, to use your influence with those in power to curtail the *absolute, despotic* power of Managers.

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## No. LIX.

The unanimous resolution of this Association was, "That our Secretary write to V. Foster, Esq., stating that this Association en-



dorse and adopt every sentence and every reply returned by the Dublin Association."

*As Teachers, Sir, wholly under Clerical Managers in this county, who are agitating for Denominational Education, we could not reasonably be expected to give a lengthened reply to question 4, without incurring grave responsibility. Probably, there are not six schools in this district attended by any pupils save R. Catholics. On the first part of query 4 our Teachers here differ: some say "No," others, "Yes," but all agree on the second part of the question. The popular feeling is with the Managers against Mixed Education. We never find R. C. children attending the school of another denomination, and it is generally vice versa where opportunities exist to send them elsewhere.*

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No. LX.

At a meeting of the ——— Association held here, the replies given by the Dublin Association to *all* the queries were discussed and unanimously agreed to. *Query No. 4 was not touched on, as religious and political matters are entirely excluded from our meetings.*

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No. LXI.

The Association unanimously endorse the replies given by the Dublin Association.

*To query 4 they give the following reply:—It has been under trial for the last 35 years, and we think it has proved very beneficial to all classes for whom it was intended, and yet the schools in this locality, whether National or otherwise, are nearly denominational, which leads us to infer that the Mixed System is not a very popular one.*

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No. LXII.

*As the system here is practically denominational, the people rarely talk of different systems, but are quite content with what they have.*

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No. LXIII.

*With regard to query 4, we would much prefer to remain silent. As, however, you wish that you would be favoured, in confidence, by the Teachers, with the state of popular feeling as regards the present and the proposed systems in their respective localities, I beg to inform you that the popular predilection is strongly in favour of the Deno-*



*minational System. While this is the feeling of the people, I may add that, as a general rule, and as far as I could ascertain, the feeling of the Teachers is as strongly the other way.*

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No. LXIV.

*The members wish to say that there has not been much experience of Mixed Education in this part of the country, but, as far as their acquaintance with it extends, they view it favourably. There does not appear to be much popular feeling about it.*

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No. LXV.

The different answers of the Dublin Association express the same sentiments as those held by the Teachers of this Association, with an addition to No. 3, to the effect that education should be compulsory from seven to fourteen.

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No. LXVI.

At a meeting of our Association held yesterday, we adopted the replies of the Dublin Association. There is one query which is not answered, viz., "Have you any information to offer relative to Night Schools?" We beg to say the introduction of Night Schools in rural localities would be a failure, as an attendance could not be calculated on for more than three months in each year, nor even that same if the pupils would not have to pay in advance. I have seven years' experience of Night Schools, one year of which the pupils did *not* pay in advance, when I only made £1 7s. 6d. for three months ! but since I adopted compulsory payments in advance I raised it to £3 for same period.

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No. LXVII.

1.—We think the apparatus should be provided by the state, viz., maps, blackboards, clocks, &c.—everything the children cannot take home.

3.—We think nothing short of compulsion will answer ; but we would say, make it compulsory between the ages of six and twelve years ; optional before and after these ages. We are led to give this answer by seeing that some of the poorer children attend



equally as well as the rich, and that some of both classes stay away on the most trifling pretensions.

4.—*Teachers keep from answering this question, because it is a vexed political question, and they are expressly forbidden to interfere in politics. But, as the system now stands, we think every party can take advantage of it. We also think that better would not be got in its stead, and that, where Manager, Teacher, and parents are determined to work together, no unpleasantness can occur. We would be sorry to see any change, as so much good has been done by it already, in bringing up children of different religions in close intimacy with each other. No matter what may be said to the contrary, in every place where children of different religions go to the same school, a kindly feeling grows up between them, which must have a good effect on their future lives.*

6.—The instruction is not nominally gratuitous, but practically it is nearly so. We think it would be better to abolish school fees altogether, and institute a local rate in their stead: it could be added to the poor rates, and would cost little additional for collection. Compulsory attendance, linked with this, would make people more attentive to education. A very small local rate would suffice to make the Teacher's position comfortable when assisted by an increase in the present miserable salaries.

8.—It is as perfect as could possibly be got up.

9.—We think it is high time to look after the condition of the Teachers; between the State and the people they are very badly treated—miserable salaries, little or no school fees, no donations, and no future prospects to cheer them on. It is no wonder that the schools are so bad; the miracle is that they are so good. But, once make the Teachers comfortable, grant them pensions, and, if possible, school residences to secure their punctual attendance—in a word, give them no reasons for gloomy reflections, and you will see how the schools will go up. We have hinted at the means in our answer to query 6.

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## No. LXVIII.

We are of opinion that Night Schools would be successful in every town and village in the country, if inducement in the shape of adequate remuneration were held out to Teachers to engage in the unwholesome and laborious business—to them—of educating adults in the evening, after a hard day's work.

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## No. LXIX.

They beg to add further, that they consider the absolute power vested in the Managers to dismiss Teachers at will as most oppressive.

*The members of the Association beg to say that, as they have ascertained by individual experience, the Mixed System has worked well; nevertheless, they consider the bulk of the people would prefer a Denominational System.*

The bad description of school-houses in this part of the country militates much against us. This want is chiefly occasioned by the poverty of the people and the want of landlord co-operation.

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## Replies from Teachers

OF SCHOOLS CONTAINING A LARGELY MIXED ATTENDANCE OF  
ROMAN CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS, IN THE RESPECTIVE PROPOR-  
TIONS AS STATED, IN ANSWER TO QUERY No. IV.

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No. 1.—R. C., 39 ; P., 61.\*

I believe it is, and will be, more beneficial, both for the present and future welfare of our country, than the Denominational System can, or could, be. It might as well be asked, "Is it beneficial to train up an army of different denominations in the same dépôt?" Now, if any person would say, Denominational Dépôts would be of no injury, he must be short-sighted indeed. Having one regiment of this denomination, and another of that, would it not have a tendency to create bad feelings towards each other? and if a meeting would happen to take place, the mutinizing regiment would be bound together as one man, both in military discipline and political views. The amount of injury done must, therefore, be great indeed ; whereas, the training them up together has often been the means of creating natural affections and good feelings towards each other, and so checking many evils which might arise were it otherwise.

Is not the training and educating the youth of our land just similar, I mean in secular instruction? Have not children who have been brought up together as schoolfellows a natural affection towards each other? Yes, even through life ; though different in denomination and grey headed, when they meet, they will call to remembrance the youthful and pleasant days they spent together at school. Change the system into Denominational, there is just the reverse : instead of affection, we have disaffection, and were it not for the law, we could not be kept back from devouring each other, just like enemies encamped under different standards.

Though some prejudiced minds have suggested to have the system changed, I hope Government may not be so foolish as to yield to them : —Change the system, and you sow the seeds of disaffection, which, at some future day, will yield an abundant harvest ; so that by trying to please every one you would please nobody. Our present system, I say, is the best.

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\* These numbers indicate, not the actual attendance, but the *per centages* of R. Catholic and Protestant scholars.



There is another evil which would arise by changing the system, viz., in localities where the majority are either Roman Catholic or Protestant, the remaining part would be deprived of the means of education, not being able to raise an average, according to our present system ; whereas, all are receiving the same privileges, as it is, if they embrace them.

I cannot say that the popular feeling in this locality is against our present system. In my own school, in which 39 per cent. are R. Catholic, their parents all appear to be well satisfied with the instructions their children are receiving ; other schools around me are just similar. If quiet-minded men would be let alone, I believe there would be peace within.

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No. 2.—R. C., 60 ; P., 40.

My experience enables me to answer this question very decidedly. My school was the only National one for 28 years in ———. We educated the children of all denominations together, in *perfect* harmony ; they loved like brothers and sisters ; the results were seen and felt in society, in the peace and unity and good-will of all classes ; the town was a paradise ; the people were satisfied, and the clergy appeared to be, and I believe *were*, equally so : but now, every sect in town has got a school of its own. The results of this are very marked indeed. All the friendly feeling and intercourse are gone. One news-room served all : we have four now, and the friendly offices are few and far between. The town is completely changed, and changed for the worse. The education is worse, and the people are dissatisfied with the change, and regret greatly that it was made, except a few devotees—a very few. But I believe the clergy are pleased with the change—at least, some of them. If the people had liberty, the whole of the children would be sent back to our school to-morrow. I do not write thus from feeling sore at the loss of pupils, for my school pays as much as ever it did. Now, what I have said of ———, I believe applies to every part of Ireland where there is a mixed population, but here we had a very *remarkable* experiment of the mixed system.

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No. 3.—R. C., 32 ; P., 68.

The system works well here. Popular feeling is entirely in favour of united education. I would suggest that religious instruction should be excluded from the school course, and attended to by the clergy alone.

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No. 4.—R. C., 21 ; P., 79.

I believe the system is beneficial, and where the people object, it is generally traceable to the promptings of their clergy.

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No. 5.—R. C., 31 ; P., 69.

It tends to the peace and prosperity of the community, and keeps up a kindly feeling during life with those who have been educated at the same school. I can speak from experience during the period of 40 years



which have elapsed since my day of being at school a pupil. A kindly feeling has existed and a friendship when I meet with those who were my schoolfellows of all denominations, which I trust will continue during life ; and the popular feeling is strong that united education should be continued.

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No. 6.—R. C., 33 ; P., 67.

As a teacher of 28 years experience under the Board, I would say most beneficial. In my school, as a Presbyterian Teacher, where nearly one-third are R. Catholics, the greatest harmony prevails.

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No. 7.—R. C., 75 ; P., 25.

I abstained from giving an answer, from the consideration that Teachers, from their position, ought not to be expected to express any opinion on the subject. However, as you wish it so much, merely for your own information, I will state what has been my own experience during 25 years spent in this locality, in the Board's service, and leave you to draw your own inference.

I am a Protestant. My Manager also is one. The great bulk of the population is R. Catholic. Our school has always been well attended. No objection has ever been made to the school by the R. Catholics, on account of religion. The clergymen of both persuasions attend on specified days, to give religious instruction to the members of their respective creeds, and the utmost harmony in that respect prevails. I have never known an instance of ill-feeling amongst the children, in respect of religion. The R. Catholic clergymen have always been most friendly and civil to me, and well disposed towards the school.

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No. 8.—R. C., 64 ; P., 36.

I have been teaching 14 years, and I have always conducted a mixed school. I am a Roman Catholic myself. I would consider it very beneficial to have all denominations educated together. Should any other method be adopted in this locality, I am certain it would be at variance with the wishes of the people. I never have known a child kept at home because the Teacher was of a different persuasion.

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Nos. 9, 10, 11.—R. C., 45 ; P., 55.

„ 55 ; „ 45.

„ 56 ; „ 44.

Very beneficial ; and the popular feeling, if permitted to run in its chosen channel, is entirely inclined in its favour. We think that it helps to liberalize and polish both Teachers and Scholars.

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No. 12.—R. C., 48 ; P., 52.

I consider it is. I never heard any suggestions averse to it from the people of this neighbourhood.



No. 13.—R. C., 68 ; P., 32.

Nothing could be more beneficial than a system by which children of all denominations would be educated together. *One advantage* would be obtained, which would more than counterbalance all the evils rightly or wrongly charged against it. That is the well-known fact, that persons who have been educated together, who have received the same lessons, participated in the same amusements, shared in the same boyish escapades, preserve for each other kindly feelings never to be obliterated by considerations of party, differences in social standing, or any of those causes which have hitherto rent our population into hostile sections. *Parents* almost universally approve of united education. They recall with pleasure the days of their youth when they themselves, without distinction of creed, contributed their daily turf to the fire of some jolly old Hedge Schoolmaster, who conducted his peripatetic academy in a neighbouring barn. It is not, therefore, from *parents* that opposition may be feared to United Education, when carried out in an impartial and unsectarian spirit. Only make the schools efficient, and but little rivalry need be feared.

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No. 14.—R. C., 45 ; P., 55.

It is, as far as I can judge, beneficial. The popular feeling on the subject is that, during the first five days of the week, beginning with Monday and ending with Friday, there should be no religious instruction, and that Saturday should be entirely devoted to this last, *i.e.*, religious instruction. This is the opinion of the laity, with some solitary exceptions.

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No. 15.—R. C., 67 ; P., 33.

Beneficial ; as I am fully convinced that being fellow-pupils produces an intimacy ceasing only with life itself. The popular feeling, as far as I can ascertain, is in accordance with this, and I may be permitted to add that my own personal experience of 17 years fully bears this out.

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No. 16.—R. C., 34 ; P., 66.

The mixed system we (Manager and Teacher), are convinced is the only one adapted to the circumstances of Ireland, and, as far as our observation extends, the sense of the people is entirely in its favour.

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No. 17.—R. C., 46 ; P., 54.

It is highly so. The associating of children of the different religious denominations together in the schools, during the most susceptible period of their lives, sitting side by side on the same bench, reading from the same books, taught by the same teacher, and joining in the same amusements, all conduce to the formation of friendships which are rarely if ever severed, and must exercise a powerful influence on their after lives, and tend, in no small degree, to allay that bitterness of religious rancour



which has so long been the bane of our common country. The following figures will show the popular feeling on the subject, at least in this locality. Numbers on the rolls, for the quarter commencing 1st October, 1868 :—E. C., 12 ; R. C., 40 ; Pres., 34.

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No. 18.—R. C., 89 ; P., 11.

To that question I give my most unqualified answer, "*It is most beneficial,*" and now I shall state my experience. I have been seven years and nine months in charge of this school, and it is one of a very peculiar character, inasmuch as the patron is of the E.C. religion, and the Manager a clergyman of that Church, while the majority of the pupils and myself are R. Catholics ; yet the result is most favourable,—such unity, friendship, and affection, and I am confident that religion amongst them has never been the cause of an angry word or the slightest ill feeling, and all without lecturing them, or preaching toleration, but merely from the *mixed system of education*. When I contrast this with my boyish experience in town, where the pupils of different religions attended separate schools, and where they were continually at enmity, the war cry of one party being always something most insulting to the religion of the opposite, I am inclined to think that any change towards the Denominational System would very materially damage the cause of religion and Irishmen as social beings. I am led to think the popular feeling here is much in favour of the present system, and the R. C. clergymen are constant visitors and sincere friends to this school.

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No. 19.—R. C., 28 ; P., 72.

Yes. I, a Presbyterian, spent all my time as a pupil and monitor in a school of about 100 for the average attendance, half of whom were R. Catholics and half Protestants. The school was taught by a R. Catholic, under Protestant management, and I can testify that in this school, which I consider only a fair example for the subject under consideration, and one of which I can speak from experience, the greatest harmony existed, and I believe still exists, under the same Teacher and management. Here ties of friendship, which could hardly otherwise exist, were formed, and which time alone will sever. If Protestant and R. Catholic pupils had been *driven*, as they often are, into opposition schools, such results could not be expected. It is the good will thus secured by bringing pupils of different denominations together, that caused me to reply "Yes" to this query. So far as I know, the popular feeling is in favour of the present system.

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No. 20.—R. C., 65 ; P., 35.

I have during the last 40 years taught children of different religious denominations together, and have found the system to work well. When any disagreement on account of religion arose, I always by an impartial line of conduct put a stop to it. (See 19th Report of the Commissioners, page 325.) People of different religions taught together are much more attached in after life, and live more amicably than if instructed in different schools. If necessary, I could adduce many proofs of the above assertion.



No. 21.—R. C., 70 ; P., 30.

I would say beneficial, but am of opinion either that no religious instruction should be given in the schools, or, if given, let it be by a clergyman, not by the Teacher.

No. 22.—R. C., 46 ; P., 54.

It must necessarily tend to remove those religious animosities unhappily so prevalent in Ireland. This I believe to be the popular feeling, any opposite wishes being almost solely confined to the R. C. priesthood.

No. 23.—R. C., 46 ; P., 54.

I would say most decidedly beneficial, and would look upon any departure from the plan as a serious step in the wrong direction. In this locality, the popular feeling is certainly in favour of mixed education. I may here state that my experience as a Teacher extends over a period of fully 30 years.

No. 24.—R. C., 70 ; P., 30.

I have never known any objection by parents to their children being educated with others of a different denomination. I think the system more beneficial than the Denominational System. Mine is a mixed school, and the children are united and most friendly to each other.

No. 25.—R. C., 71 ; P., 29.

Very beneficial, and not a word uttered against it. The names at present on the roll give the following :—

R. C., 71 ; E. C., 15 ; Presb., 14 = 100,  
and there is the utmost harmony ever manifested amongst the pupils. I may mention that our Teacher and his Assistant (a female), are both Presbyterians, and I (the Manager) am the Presbyterian Minister of a small village, or rather country district, adjoining.

No. 26.—R. C., 67 ; P., 33.

I consider it beneficial, and have never heard any objections to it here.

No. 27.—R. C., 57 ; P., 43.

Decidedly beneficial, inasmuch as it tends very materially to allay political animosity, to modify and *almost entirely to eradicate party feeling*. The Denominational System, on the contrary, by separating the children of different religious beliefs while receiving their education, would tend to increase party feeling in after life, and thereby be highly detrimental to the *social* as well as the educational interests of the country. The popular feeling on the subject is that *mixed education* is the system for Ireland, and that the Denominational System would be *ruinous* in every sense of the term to the country.



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No. XXVIII.—R. C., 83 ; P., 17.

Very beneficial, as being the surest way of keeping down sectarianism, and, as far as I know, the people are satisfied with the system as at present carried out. Since I entered the Board's service, over 21 years ago, I had charge of several schools, all attended by pupils of different denominations, and I never got a complaint from either parents or pupils, on the subject of religion.

When, at the meeting of our Association, I submitted to them the above answer, the whole meeting (with the exception of one man, who wished to adopt the Dublin reply) endorsed it so emphatically, that I found I would have been justified in returning you a far more decidedly affirmative answer. I believe, and I think I know, that the vast majority of Teachers would answer No. 4 affirmatively, were it not that, if known, it would in many cases ensure their dismissal by their Managers. To interpret each case of silence as an affirmative reply, would, I most respectfully submit, be perfectly correct.

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No. XXIX.—R. C., 40 ; P., 60.

Decidedly beneficial. Those who know most of the history of Ireland believe that its disadvantages as a nation arise from religious dissensions, which have their origin in want of knowledge of each other. I believe the best way to remedy this great evil is to have the different sects of religion educated at the same school, as it may be presumed that children sitting on the same bench, and all learning the same lessons of Christian charity, will, when they grow to manhood, practise the lessons so taught, and entertain kindly feelings towards each other.

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XXX.—R. C., 77 ; P., 22.

The principal advantage is that it fosters a kindly feeling between persons of different religious denominations educated at the same school, and for this reason many persons are in favour of it. The popular feeling, however, seems to be a good deal divided on the matter, though in what proportion I am unable to say. I may add, that, so far as I can judge, the lower classes form no opinion on the matter at all, but leave it entirely in the hands of persons more competent to deal with it. For my own part, I believe that the influence of religion is the principal preventative against illegal combinations in Ireland, and that anything which tends to increase or diminish that influence must be a matter of considerable importance to the country.

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XXXI.—R. C., 70 ; P., 30.

It is certainly not beneficial, and the popular feeling is exceedingly strong against such a system.

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XXXII.—R. C., 56 ; P., 44.

It is my deliberate opinion—an opinion confirmed by considerable observation and experience—that the popular feeling is against the system of educating children of different denominations together.



## XXXIII.—R. C., 69 ; P., 31.

I would say, as far as my own experience goes, it is not. Still I believe that popular feeling is not against it.

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## XXXIV.—R. C., 58 ; P., 42.

I think not, at least in this part of the country, and with the feeling that pervades the people at present. The popular feeling, in my opinion, is for separate instruction ; it is so, I know, with the clergy. There are some, however, of a different opinion, who say that it is better to educate children of different denominations together, as it has a tendency to ameliorate and harmonize their feelings towards one another, and make their friendship more lasting when they come to manhood. This, indeed, is what we would all wish, if it could be accomplished.

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## XXXV.—R. C., 82 ; P., 18.

It is not, unless where there is a separate apartment for each denomination at the time of religious instruction, every parent wishing his children to receive religious instruction, as well as secular.

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## XXXVI.—R. C., 59 ; P., 41.

I have known no evil effects to arise from children of different denominations being educated together. Popular feeling is becoming distinctly in favour of Denominational Education.

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## XXXVII.—R. C., 55 ; P., 45.

This question must be settled by the higher authorities or vote of the people. I cannot know the minds of the country on this delicate point, but in some schools I find the Presbyterian pupils go to Presbyterian Teachers ; in other schools the Established Church children and R. C. children go to E. C. and R. C. Teachers. There is a professional leaning just here, although no cause in the Teachers.

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## Further Remarks

BY THE WRITER OF REPLY No. XXX.

1 and 2.—I believe that under the present system the poorer classes have sufficient opportunity of receiving education ; and that, except in some very few cases of extreme poverty or carelessness, they avail themselves of the means which have been put within their reach.

3.—Irregularity of attendance is one of the most serious evils we have to contend against, and the only remedial means I know of are the following : (1.) Let the Teacher make his school cheerful and happy, and the children will be anxious to attend ; (2.) Let him make the school a good one, and the parents will sacrifice trifling matters of convenience in order to send them ; (3) Make the pupils pay for the absent time, as well as for the time of actual attendance, and you may rely upon it that the parents will try hard to have value for their money. This last matter would not only increase the attendance, but would nearly double the amount of school fees in a year or two. In order to suit the convenience of the people the charge for any portion of time less than a quarter could be settled by previous agreement, and paid in advance. I may also add, that the Teacher who inflicts the least amount of punishment, and looks most closely after the home lessons, is sure to have the largest and the most regular attendance. To sum up then, there are four things that a Teacher must do, in order to insure the regular attendance of his pupils : he must make them happy, he must make them learn, he must make them work at home, and he must make them pay. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the charges should be reduced considerably in the case of persons whose means are very limited.

6.—Where schools are too numerous, as they are in many localities, payment of school fees is rarely demanded, lest some of the children might be removed, and thereby cause the Teacher to lose a portion of his salary from the Board. In this way hundreds of pupils are receiving a gratuitous education, whose parents are quite able to pay, and who spend more money in useless luxuries in a month, than the poor Teacher can afford to do in a year. At rates varying from a shilling to two and sixpence a quarter, at least double the present amount of school fees might be obtained without diminishing the number of pupils, or exercising any undue pressure on the people. I know from experience that such a course is likely to diminish the attendance at first, but it ultimately gives an earnest, healthy tone to the school, makes the attendance more regular, and the Teacher more respected.

7.—Night Schools would be very useful, and are very much desired by the people ; but I am afraid that in some cases they might give rise to unpleasant results.

8.—I believe that the present system of inspection is quite sufficient



for its purpose. It is working well, and I do not see how any change could be made in it for the better.

9.—With regard to improving the position of Teachers, and increasing the efficiency of their schools, I am of opinion that, in addition to what I have already mentioned, there should be a local tax levied, not as a substitute for school fees, but as a means of erecting free residences for the Teachers. There should also be an increase of salary given immediately by the State ; and some provision made as soon as possible for superannuated Teachers, that would prevent them from ending their days among the dregs of society, within the prison walls of a workhouse. I may here remark that in a country like Ireland, I think it is impolitic on the part of the Government to treat with neglect or indifference those who hold in their hands the power of moulding the minds of each successive generation, and whose opinions are invariably looked up to in every case of doubt or difficulty in their respective localities.

As regards payment of Teachers, I wonder why there is so much diversity of opinion on the subject. Two things should determine a Teacher's salary : (1.) His fitness for the office ; (2.) The actual amount of useful work which he performs in his school. The first is easily ascertained, by subjecting the Teacher to examination ; the second, though apparently complicated, can be determined with equal ease and with perfect certainty. It depends entirely on the number of pupils, their proficiency in their respective classes, and the number of removals from class to class during the previous twelve months.

In conclusion, permit me to add that I think it is better to have Teachers' salaries fixed than fluctuating, as the latter would be likely to cause a great deal of trouble, confusion, and dissatisfaction, without any corresponding advantage.