

[It may be interesting to quote here a digest of the school laws of the United States of America regarding text-books, which appeared in the Report of the Ontario Education Department for 1906. It is as follows:—

“The laws of the States of Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont make it compulsory on school authorities to provide free text-books for pupils.

“The following States have provisions in their laws whereby the schools through the district, county, town, or corporation, as the case may be, may provide free text-books, if desired—Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, West Virginia, Wisconsin; while the laws of the States of Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, South Carolina, and Virginia make provision for free text-books to those pupils whose parents or guardians are not able to buy them.

“The following States require a uniform series of text-books in all the schools: California, Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.*

“Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, South Dakota, Washington, and West Virginia have provisions for county uniformity; while all the States, so far as can be ascertained from the Commissioner’s report, require at least school-district uniformity in text-books.”]

Head Teachers’ Association.

A very useful and energetic society in Chicago is the Association of Principals, or head teachers. It takes up the study of various educational problems, often suggested by the Superintendent of Schools, draws up proposals for syllabuses of work, setting up special committees for these purposes, and in various ways assists the Board of Education, which is largely guided by its advice. Our Educational Institutes might with advantage be used to do more of this kind of work than they do at present. As with us, the relation between the officials and the teachers’ representatives seems to be of a friendly nature. Reference has already been made to the valuable Report of the Committee on Geography, reproduced in part in the Appendix; in the Appendix also will be found another report of the Principals’ Association—namely, the Report of the Committee on Mathematics. The association is also called together to discuss subjects brought before it by the Superintendent of Schools: for instance, when suggestions were made by the principal and staff of the Normal School for a modified course of study for the practice schools, the matter was brought before the principals to obtain their opinion thereon. (This course sets forth the underlying ideas of the work attempted in the public elementary schools of Chicago so well that it will appear in the Appendix, instead of the actual programme of the schools.)

One department of the Board of Education that should not be overlooked is the Department of Child-study and Pedagogical Investigation, the Director of which (Dr. Daniel P. Macmillan) is able to give most valuable advice, from the hygienic, psychological, or pedagogic expert’s point of view, in regard to the treatment of children in various phases of their school life. A good idea of the work done by this department may be gained from its report for the year 1903, part of which is printed under its proper heading in the Appendix, and part is included in the Report of the Parental School.

Dr. Macmillan’s report for 1906 devoted considerable attention to the question of the treatment of backward children. Some attempts (more or less experimental) had been made to deal with these children in separate classes (called “ungraded classes”) in four of the city schools, and these attempts had met with a certain degree of success. Dr. Macmillan wished to emphasize the necessity to deal with the matter in a more systematic way. Among those in the ungraded rooms he found,—

First group; children of subnormal intelligence, and hence unable to do the work of the regular school classes.

Second; children who are incorrigible for several reasons, and are sent to these rooms purely for disciplinary purposes.

Third; children who are behind their classes in some school subject, and are returned to their proper grade work when this deficiency is made up.

Fourth; children unable to carry on the regular work of the course on account of the fact that they do not understand the English language.

* Probably none of these States, except California, can be said to be very advanced in matters of education.