

Introduction.

fully passed an examination for teachers before a Board organised by the Government; (c) the instruction given must come up to the proper standard; (d) the children of the poor are to be received gratuitously; and (e) the school is subject to Government inspection.¹ The defect, however, seems to be the non-provision for a minority of less than twenty fathers.

Its probable effects.

The effect will probably be that there will be in towns as many undenominational schools as ever, but that in the rural districts, where the Roman Catholic clergy have greater influence than in many of the towns, there will be great changes,² and the peasantry will be relieved from the serious hardship of paying for schools which they do not use. The law, as regards State schools, still remains intact in respect of its secular character, and in respect of the provisions for religious teaching; but the main amendment promotes the support of schools where such religious doctrines and formularies, be they Roman Catholic³ or otherwise, as the managers of the school think proper, form a portion of the ordinary plan of study.⁴

Defects of Act.

However, until such measures be introduced as provide that consideration be shown towards *all*, one can scarcely expect to find that the Belgian educational system will be devoid of that friction which would alone prevent the perfecting of details apart from those relating to religious teaching.⁵

MAIN FEATURES.

The main features of the Belgian system are as follow :—

School age.

(1.) School age is defined to be from the age of six to that of fourteen, but attendance is not compulsory;⁶ and there is no restriction against the employment of uneducated or young children.⁷ Persuasion instead of compulsion is relied upon.⁸

Education secular, and not gratuitous.

(2.) Education is, subject to the important provisions already mentioned, secular,⁹ and not gratuitous, except for the needy.¹⁰

Private tuition not under Government control.

(3.) The Government only exercise control over State schools, not over private ones, or scholars receiving private tuition; and the sole exception is that in denominational schools receiving State aid they are subject to the five conditions already mentioned.

Different classes of schools.

(4.) There are four classes of public schools for children, and also special schools; some particulars concerning which are given in the following table :—

TABULAR STATEMENT CONCERNING BELGIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (EXCLUSIVE OF NORMAL SCHOOLS).

Classes of School.	How supported.	Usual age of frequenting.	Fees payable.	Instruction.
(1) INFANT schools ¹¹ (écoles gardiennes communales—jardins d'enfants.)	The (a) Communes (primarily), (b) State and Provinces, (c) Fees.	3 to 6-7 years.	Instruction is gratuitous to the poor; in other classes a small fee payable.	Programme generally based on the method of Froebel. ¹²

¹ See loi 20 sept., 1884, art. 9.

² Note letter from Mr. Hodgson in *Times*, 25 Nov., 1884.

³ The teachers in the Roman Catholic subsidized schools will probably be "Petits Frères" (Christian Brothers).

⁴ Note similarities to the English voluntary school system; although, of course, there are grave dissimilarities.

"In Holland the law of 1857 enacts that while a general religious instruction is to be given in the State schools, instruction on specific points is to be left to the different religious communities themselves." See paper on "Primary Education," read by W. T. Bailey, on 18 Dec., 1883, before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Soc., Dublin. E. Ponsonby, Dublin, 1884.

⁵ Note comparison, by M. Couvreur, between Swiss and Belgian results, I.E.C., vol. 13, pp. 325, 326.

⁶ Note the results, see remarks of M. Couvreur, I.E.C., vol. 13, p. 324. See also p. 52 *supra*, and also note 1 thereon.

⁷ See also R.C., vol. 1, pp. 25, 354, 355, 359, 360.

⁸ See loi, 1879, arts. 21, 22. Note similarity to American principle.

⁹ As before noted, in Europe where there is no official religious teaching, it is apparently deemed requisite to teach "Morale."

¹⁰ See loi 20 sept., 1884, art. 3.

¹¹ The Communal Councils regulate everything relating to their establishment and organization. See Art. 2 of loi 20 sept., 1884.

¹² See I.E.C., vol. 13, p. 106. Note also "Crèches" institution.