

public comment on the recent papers with the tempest of hostile criticism which those of last summer evoked, it would appear that the old age has been verified. Doubtless the storm cleared the educational atmosphere, and exerted a beneficial influence in other respects. Apart from the question of results, I believe it is the general feeling of both teachers and candidates that the papers this year were a marked improvement on those of 1886, and that, taken as a whole, they did not furnish much ground for fault-finding. The plan of having two examiners to each paper has apparently worked well, though in a few cases the associate has hardly been able to restrain the strong tendencies of the examiner-in-chief. Three points, however, may be mentioned in which there seems to be room for further improvement.

(1) The papers should be revised with the utmost care, in order that neither errors nor omissions may mislead or perplex the candidates, and handicap them in their efforts to pass.

(2) Every paper should be carefully revised by the committee as a whole, in order that the papers on each subject may be seen to be properly graded from entrance to first class certificates, and that such vagaries of individual examiners as manifested themselves in the third class history paper this year may be kept in check.

(3) The method adopted of giving bonus questions is open to serious objections. Not only does it virtually lower the percentage required to pass, but in some cases it allows a candidate who knows nothing well and does nothing well to make up that percentage from a large number of imperfect scraps of answers. Such at least has been my experience in connection with the entrance examination, and I am told that others have noted the same objections. I trust, therefore, that in future the method

adopted will be that recommended by the High School section last year, viz. : "that each paper shall contain more questions than the candidate is permitted to attempt," thus allowing him a choice, and giving scope for a variety of taste or teaching, but requiring him to do satisfactorily what he does undertake.

From examination papers to text books is an easy transition, and I shall, therefore, next touch briefly on that vexed and somewhat delicate question. As most of you are aware, that was one of the subjects on our programme as originally agreed on, and I for one greatly regret that the illness of Inspector Morgan, who had agreed to deal with it, led to its being dropped from the list. The subject is wide enough and important enough to require the most careful consideration, such as it would no doubt have received at the hands of Mr. Morgan. To an audience like this I need scarcely enlarge on the importance of our having suitable text-books. Text books are in a measure our tools, and while it is true that a good workman with poor tools will produce better results than a poor workman with the best of tools, we have a right to ask that we shall not be handicapped in our work by having to use inferior tools, if by pursuing a different policy better ones are to be had without any material increase of cost.

That under the present system of authorizing text books we may get some good, even excellent books, I am quite willing to admit; that under it we have already got some very unsuitable ones cannot, I think, be successfully denied, and that some of those recently issued or yet to see the light are likely to prove unsatisfactory there is, therefore, some reason to fear. That the Minister in adopting the present system has been actuated by the best of motives and