

sion must be done wholly by university professors? Is it not the fact that in almost every considerable town or city, such as are likely to be chosen as centres for this work, there are to be found men and women, graduates of the universities, some of them specialists in certain lines of investigation, who have kept up their studies, and whose services could be utilized with excellent effect in such a work? In not a few cases, we venture to believe that such persons would throw themselves heartily into the work, asking little or no remuneration, for the sake both of the benefit that would result to themselves and the pleasure they would take in becoming intellectually helpful to others. Such teachers would often more than make up in enthusiasm what they might lack in experience. If we might venture on a personal instance, we might refer by way of illustration to the study of Shakespeare, that was conducted in the Rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association last winter, under the direction of Mr. William Houston, M.A., Librarian of the Ontario Legislature, by a studious and enthusiastic class of considerable size. The universities could be very helpful in such a movement by examining the work done and giving it fair recognition, according to their own standards. Dr. Grant further suggests that as a central fund would be required for various purposes, such as conducting examinations, paying a secretary, etc., even although the whole payment of lecturers and other local expenses should be borne by pupils and local societies, "the Minister of Education might very well ask the Legislature for a modest grant." There is, it seems to us, room for question whether the receipt of Government aid might not prejudice the movement at the outset in the eyes of many who would cordially approve of it as a purely voluntary work. It would also, to our thinking, be at least doubtful whether a larger success, though it might be slower in coming, would not ultimately be reached along the lines of purely voluntary and philanthropic effort. Those are, however, questions of detail. What is at once needed, and we should be glad to see some influential educators take the initiative, is that a meeting of all interested in such a work should be called at an early day, with a view to the formation of a University Extension Society for Canada.

THE annual complaints in regard to the results of the annual examinations conducted by the Education Department have lost nothing of their usual vigour this year, and their echoes have hardly yet died out. For years the same outcry, directed partly against the character of the examination papers, partly against the reading and valuation of the competitors' answers, has followed close upon the heels of the public announcement of results. Even the recent changes, which have had the effect of throwing the examinations almost wholly into the hands of the teachers themselves, have seemingly not availed to allay the dissatisfaction. How is this? Is the public to infer that the combined wisdom of teachers, professors and Government officials is unequal to the task of devising a fair and workable system of examinations? Or do unsuccessful teachers merely raise this recurrent hue and cry in order to cover up their own shortcomings? Some suggest that neither is the true explanation, but that the fault is in the machine itself, that there is too much "examination" in the whole business. Is it possible to expect satisfactory results, they ask, from a system under which the reputation of schools and the standing and emoluments of teachers are made to depend upon the hap-hazard results of a set of examinations? The best educators in the land are forced to admit that the work even of the most famous schools and teachers is, of sheer necessity, a race for the examination goal—a perpetual training and drilling and cramming with a view, not to healthy and harmonious mental development, but to success at examinations. To this end teachers are worried and pupils are driven. From the beginning of term to the dreaded day of examination all are hurrying and scrambling. The teacher knows full well that his reputation and very likely his situation depend upon the speed with which he can prepare his best pupils for the ordeal, the number of them who can be trained in a given time to take high marks and the number of marks they can be trained to take. One of the inevitable results is, that an undue share of the teacher's energy and attention is given to the promising few and corresponding injustice often done to the unpromising many. The teacher who knows what true education is and conscientiously uses his knowledge is left far behind in the race. His school becomes a bye-word and the teacher has often, poor fellow, to abandon the profession

in disgust, for some other in which honest work counts for more, and artificial and superficial show for less. In saying these things we are rather giving utterance to the views of many able and thoughtful educators, than expressing the results of personal observation. For our own part while we are fully persuaded that examinations as usually conducted are injurious and often fatal to true educational work, we are unable to see clearly how they can be dispensed with, or what can be substituted for them. Until some substitute can be devised we can only fall back on the old principle that there are examinations and examinations, and that it is the fault of the examiners themselves if the questions they ask and their modes of estimating the values of answers given are not such as to put hasty and superficial workers at fault, and cramming at a discount, and to give the rewards to true and faithful educational work. Whether the whole system of honours and prizes is not a vicious one is another question, to which many of the thoughtful do not hesitate to give an affirmative answer.

THE formal opening of the St. Clair Tunnel on Saturday was an event of more than ordinary interest. From the engineering point of view it marks the success of a new method, and reflects the highest credit on the Canadian engineer, Mr. Hobson, who, as Sir Henry Tyler informed the guests at the dinner given in honour of the achievement, had designed the tunnel, had had constructed under his own superintendence all the necessary apparatus and appliances, and had himself successfully carried through the work. The invention and use of the circular or tubular shield driven by hydraulic pressure has rendered sub-marine tunnelling comparatively easy under conditions which without that device would have made it well-nigh impossible. As a commercial enterprise this tunnel, which is the offspring of a necessity created by the demands of a traffic several times greater than that which passes through the famous Suez Canal, not only reflects great credit upon the energy and enterprise of the Grand Trunk Railway, but demonstrates the utility of the freest intercourse between the two countries which it connects. It is no wonder that several of the orators took occasion to dwell on the folly of the fiscal policy, which places a Customs officer at each end of the subway as soon as it is opened, to obstruct the traffic which that way has been constructed at great expense to facilitate. The occasion further suggests the powerful influence which these great international railways exert in promoting friendly intercourse and good feeling between the two countries. It is evident that with the increase of traffic along these lines the ties of self-interest which should bind the two peoples to perpetual peace, by rendering any interruption of commercial intercourse disastrous alike to both, are multiplied and strengthened. Nor is the sentiment created one of sordid self-interest alone. The speeches of representatives of England, the United States and Canada, alike happily bore witness to the fact that international commerce tends powerfully to promote international good-will. They also tended to show that there is no necessary connection between the most intimate commercial relations and political amalgamation, and no reason why we might not for a century have the freest commercial intercourse with our mighty neighbour, without any sacrifice of Canadian independence or nationalism.

THE Seal Question seems to be coming again to the surface. Probably the statement that Sir Julian Pauncefote has protested against an alleged violation of the terms of the *modus vivendi* by the North American Commercial Company need not create much uneasiness. If such a complaint has actually been made, it is most likely that the difficulty is due, as explained by a Washington correspondent, to a mere difference of opinion as to whether the number of seals which the Company in question was permitted to take should be counted from the date of the agreement or from the beginning of the season. The British Government seems to have taken the latter view; the Commercial Company, and it is not unlikely the Washington Administration, the former. But it is inconceivable that a mere matter of 5,000 seals, more or less, could be permitted to interfere seriously with the progress of negotiations. A much more alarming incident would be a wide difference of opinion, which there seems to be some reason to fear, between the British and the American Commissioners as to the danger of extermination of the seals by open-sea fishing. The report of the three Commissioners who were sent to Behring Sea by the Washing-

ton Government to examine and report on the condition of the fisheries there is said to be to the effect that the practice of hunting seals in the open sea must be stopped, if it is desired to perpetuate the species. The British Commissioners have not yet been heard from, but the view above presented is not only contrary to probability, as seen from the common sense point of view, but contrary to what is said to be the testimony of the masters of the sealing vessels, who, though perhaps interested witnesses, have certainly the very best opportunities for ascertaining the facts. The firm tone of the London *Times* may be taken to indicate that Lord Salisbury does not intend to yield to unfair or arbitrary demands; while its reasoning that the danger of extermination does not arise from hunting on the high seas, but from excessive slaughter of the animals in the haunts where they are perfectly helpless, appears sound. The report of the British Commissioners will be awaited with interest, and in the hope that when it is presented the two Governments may speedily find a place of compromise in some arrangement midway between the two extremes of opinion. It is not unlikely that this is one of the cases in which truth, as well as safety, is to be found in the *via media*.

THOUGH it is now certain that British marines have not taken possession of and fortified Sigri, in Mitylene, as was believed when we went to press last week, the incident has not yet been fully explained. That there was something in it more than mere customary drilling or manœuvring there still seems reason to believe. It has been said that British ships have long had the privilege, by permission of the Porte, of drilling on or among the islands of the Archipelago, but if this had been a customary movement it could hardly have attracted so much attention. Much less could it have led to a formal request from the Turkish Government for explanation. It is probable that Lord Salisbury's explanation may soon be made public. In the meantime the most reasonable conjecture is, perhaps, that while the British Government had no intention of committing an outrage by taking possession of a bit of Turkish territory in time of peace, they may have designed the movement as a feint, suggesting to both Russia and Turkey the ease with which Great Britain could settle the question, if necessary, by taking the guarding of the Dardanelles into her own hands. The significant and determined declaration of the *Standard*, supposed to be inspired, that "as long as Turkey effectually guards the Straits, England will not interfere, but immediately the Government of the Sultan, in a fit of timidity, perversity or bewilderment, shows itself incapable of performing that imperative duty, England will assuredly not shrink from having recourse to expedients for meeting the difficulty," coincides with this view. The least that can be inferred from the Mitylene occurrence and this declaration combined is that the British Government were not unwilling that it should be known that a strong British fleet is within striking distance of the Straits, and will not hesitate to take action if necessary. Whatever the ultimate results of this attitude, there can be little doubt that it will, for the present, be effective in preserving the peace, and enforcing the continued observance of the Treaty restrictions in respect to the Dardanelles. There is no reason to believe that Russia is yet ready to venture on open violation of the Treaty.

ACCORDING to a correspondent of the London *Times*, the overflowing of American tourists of the common and lower class varieties is interfering with the enjoyment of pleasure-seeking Englishmen, who find themselves pursued "into every pleasant retreat," and who, in consequence, are not frequenting some of the favourite resorts in as great numbers as formerly. The world is large, and access to most European resorts is free to those who can pay for it, if we may be allowed the paradox. We are unable, therefore, to sympathize very deeply with this new grievance of the persecuted English traveller, especially as he can be pretty safely trusted to take care of himself, and to maintain the national reserve and exclusiveness, even under circumstances so unfavourable as the proximity of a company of enquiring Yankees. A question of somewhat wider interest is that raised by the New York *Tribune*, through an interview with Senator Washburn, of Minnesota. That gentleman is very uncompromising to the great army of American sight-seers, which every year invades the European Continent, "spending \$75,000,000 of American money," and "bringing back nothing to speak of." The Senator says that "Europe