

THE PROPOSED TEACHERS' UNION.

BY ONLOOKER IN THE CANADA CITIZEN.

The *New England Journal of Education*, speaking of the proposal to establish a teachers' union for Ontario asks: "After organization, would striking and boycotting be in order?"

The *Toronto Educational Monthly*, which has been an earnest supporter of the union movement, replies: "We have not given the slightest indication of recommending any such course; rather the very opposite." It seems to me that each of these journals is clearly under a misapprehension as to the real significance of the term "boycott" though each is doubtless clear as to the meaning of "strike." A union that does not "boycott" recalcitrant or disloyal members will find it hard to justify its own existence, for "boycotting" is simply a brief way of designating the practice of bringing the public opinion of the union to bear on the member who is false to the obligations, express or implied, which he assumed when he became a member of it.

Suppose, for instance, that a certain practice, regarded as unprofessional, is expressly or impliedly forbidden to members of the union—as, for example, seducing good pupils from each other's schools. What is to be done to the teacher who resorts to it? The offence is not a violation of the school law, and therefore it cannot be visited with legal penalties. The only possible means the profession have of inflicting retribution is to "boycott" the offender—that is, to shun him, refuse to recognize him as one of themselves, freeze him out both socially and professionally. Members of the medical profession do this with their brethren who steal patients, or are guilty of the flagrant crime of advertising themselves. A similar practice prevails in the legal profession. A lawyer who is in the habit of doing unprofessional things will soon find himself treated by his fellow-lawyers as the leper was treated by the Jews of old—in other words, he will be "boycotted." And why should not teachers "boycott" offending brethren? As a matter of fact they do so now, but they might do it far more effectively if their profession were an organized one.

Apart from the question of "boycotting" altogether, the suggestion that teachers should organize themselves into a guild is a good one. The three objects to be attained are according to the *Educational Monthly*, (1) incorporation; (2) an influential voice in determining who are to be teachers; and (3) mutual benefits. This is putting the case for organization very mildly indeed. One of the most important effects of it would be to stimulate the growth of professional feeling amongst the teaching fraternity. At present they are a brotherhood only in name; it depends entirely on themselves whether they become one in reality. Incalculable benefit has been conferred on the working classes by organization. The average of individual intelligence has been enormously raised by business and other discussions in their unions, and in this direction a teachers' union would have a similar effect on its members. Their intelligence at present is rather of the bookish sort, valuable so far as it goes, but needing to be supplemented by culture of a more practical kind. Teachers' institutes, and conventions, and reading circles, are all good in their place, but the theory underlying them is that of pedagogical training—the development of professional skill rather than the promotion of a professional or guild spirit.

The subject will come up in a very practical shape at the meeting of the Provincial Teachers' Association next month. Those interested in it have been asked to meet in Toronto on the Monday before the opening of the Provincial Convention, and as the meeting will be one in which discussion can be carried on with the most perfect frankness it should be able to settle the question whether

a teachers' union is likely to be generally supported by the profession. The subject will be brought before the convention itself by Principal Dickson of Upper Canada College, who is to discuss the expediency of establishing a "College of Preceptors." Such a college, in the ordinary understanding of the term, would mean a professional body like the Law Society of Upper Canada, or the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons. It would be difficult to show that teachers have not as good a right to the status of a guild under the law as lawyers and doctors have. If it be said that part of the cost of education is borne by the Province at large, and that this part includes the maintenance of training schools, the obvious answer is, that whatever is paid out directly to schools is in diminution of local burdens, and that the question of maintaining training schools is one of expediency from the point of view of the general public. The question of granting incorporation to teachers would be just what it is now if the Government required the qualification without furnishing the training schools. Indeed, as these schools tend to increase competition by multiplying teachers, their existence is really one more argument in favor of allowing teachers to have some say as to the condition of entrance into their profession.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in a recent address, said: "In America, in the colonies, and finally, in our own country also, the tendency will rather be, it seems to me, to strengthen and enlarge, more or less, the instruction given in the schools which we call elementary, schools for the mass of the community,—to say that that instruction, indeed, is indispensable for every citizen, that this is all the instruction which is strictly necessary, and that whoever wants more instruction than this must get it at his own expense as he can. Under these circumstances, the future of high culture and high studies must depend most upon the love of individuals for them and the faith of individuals in them. Perhaps this has always been their best support, and it is a support which, happily for mankind, will, I believe, never fail. In communities where there are no endowments these will be the only support of high studies and fine culture. But human nature is weak, and I prefer, I confess, that these supports, however strong and staunch they may be, of high studies and fine culture should not have the whole weight thrown upon them, should not be the only supports. Here is the great advantage of endowments, and public foundations fix and fortify our profession of faith toward high studies and serious culture."

Examination Papers Examined.

The circular, to which the following are replies, contained the following questions:

- (1). Were those Examination Papers, as a whole, such as to afford a fair and reasonable test of the fitness of candidates to receive non-professional certificates and to enter the High Schools, respectively?
- (2). If not, which of the papers were specially objectionable, and on what grounds?
- (3). What appears to be the cause of the faults indicated, and what remedy would you propose?

Yours respectfully,

Editor CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL.

REPLIES FROM HEAD MASTERS OF HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGIATE INSTITUTES.
(Continued).

IX.

I object to the Grammar papers set for entrance candidates. The only prose sentence for analysis was so long and complicated that fully three-fourths of the pupils failed to grapple with it. They