

5. The newspaper press in each county is respectfully requested to give notice of the time, place, and objects of the School Convention for such county.

I have the honor to be,
Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
E. RYERSON,
Chief Superintendent of Education.

EDUCATION OFFICE,
Toronto, 30th January, 1869.

I. Intercommunications and the Press.

COLCHESTER, 16th January, 1869.

To the Editor of the *Journal of Education*.

SIR,—It is a trite but true saying, that the Teacher makes the School. I think one advantage that may reasonably be expected to be gained by the change in the school system of the Province will be a better discrimination with regard to the grade of certificates granted to Teachers.

It would appear to be almost a self evident truth that the best Teachers should have the highest grade of certificate, but all persons conversant with the working of the school system hitherto know well that frequently Teachers holding from year to year only a second class certificate are more successful in the practice of their profession than some who have received a first class certificate. This at first sight appears to throw blame on the County Boards, but it is quite possible that the County Boards may not have been chargeable with the evil. It was impossible for the Board to judge of the standing of the Teacher in respect to the actual practice of his profession—the only judgment possible in the circumstances was an estimate of his knowledge of the subjects taught in the schools. It is manifest that a knowledge of the subjects taught in school is a matter quite distinct from a Teacher's aptitude to impart knowledge, his zeal and success in teaching these subjects. It will be conceded by all that a Teacher's zeal and success in teaching should be a large element in forming an estimate as to what grade of certificate he should receive. The County Superintendent, from his notes taken at the examination of each school in the County, will now be able to afford to the new County Board such information respecting the management of each school, and the teaching capabilities of the teacher thereof, as will put in the power of the Board to do justice to the industrious and deserving.

In my own experience, and I have reason to judge in the experience of many other Superintendents, the advice and remonstrances of the Superintendent have been productive of no good result in the practice of inefficient teachers. Their only, or at least their principal motive being to get along without trouble with the Trustees and parents. In order to please these parties a vicious system has become prevalent of putting children forward into classes for the studies proper to which they are altogether unprepared. This substitution of a sham progress for a real one is a practice most injurious to the real advancement of the pupils. During the former part of last year, in one of the schools under my charge, a young woman was engaged who appeared to have a genius for teaching. Her plan was that in all classes above the first, the lessons should be recited cleverly and well, and any scholar, who after repeated trials, was either unable or unwilling to come up to the requisite standard was put back to the class below. This method presented to the scholar a strong motive for exertion and avoided the endless blunders common in most schools, which exhaust the patience of the teacher and disgust the class with their work. As this school had in a great measure been previously conducted on the plan of sham progress the cases of "putting back" were numerous, and the teacher in proportion lost in popularity. She however steadily followed up her method, and towards the end of her term of six months it was delightful to witness the excellent condition of the school. The correct recitation of lessons, the bright eye and intelligent answer shewed that the scholars had caught the spirit of the Teacher. But the term of probation was too short; if the teacher had been sustained for a longer time, the good effects of her method would have forced themselves on the attention of her employers, and the services of that excellent teacher would not have been lost to the township, as is now the case.

Under the former system the unfaithful, indolent teacher, or even one who being neither indolent nor unfaithful, yet disliked teaching, passed from school to school and from township to township, was engaged on the faith of his first class certificate and injured every school with which he became connected. If you think the above

fitted for insertion in the *Journal* you are at liberty to make what use of it you may judge proper.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
JAMES BELL,
Local Supt. for Colchester.

2. SCHOOL TEACHING—"STYLE."

A Correspondent of the *Chatham Planet*, whose communications have already appeared in these columns, writes again to the *Planet*, as follows:—

SIR:—In my last I promised to treat of the duties of Teachers, and, as I consider the "Style" of a Teacher an important feature, and the cultivation of it an imperative duty, I shall treat of it at present.

The most necessary and most useful style for an instructor is a plain, perspicuous and easy one, but any person who is acquainted with the style of very many teachers must have observed how deplorably deficient they are in the qualification. I will point out some of their errors, and then give a few directions how to arrive at the proper standard in this qualification.

The appearance of a teacher in the school-room is the first thing that draws our attention. Some are slovenly in every point of appearance; their dress is not an example for pupils to follow. The teacher does not require fashionable dress, but he requires durable and neat clothing, but especially does he require to set an example in cleanliness. I do not wish any to suppose that I apply this to all; there are only a few who err in this matter. The manner in which he stands before the class is of great importance; some lean on their desk with their head supported on their hand as if it was borne down by some weight, but instead of that weight being wisdom it is "Constitutional tiredness;" Their whole deportment is anything else than graceful. The body should be an emblem of the mind.

Others have a fantastic style, especially in the manner of discourse. They use foreign words that are not sufficiently naturalized, and use terms of art on every occasion. It is true that in teaching the sciences we have to use some foreign names, because the English language is deficient in names suitable to the variety of subjects belonging to learning, but they should be used very seldomly—only when absolutely necessary.

Others use fine affected words that belong only to Court; or some peculiar phrases that belong only to the theatre; these should not be used; poetical language being too metaphorical for children to comprehend. The language should be plain and brought to a level with the pupil's attainments.

Slang phrases should be carefully avoided. It is not to be supposed that men of liberal education have been brought up where such language has been used, besides, it would create very offensive ideas were illustrations drawn from the scullery or jokes.

An obscure and mysterious manner of expression should be avoided. Some persons have been led by some foolish prejudices into a dark unintelligible way of thinking and speaking. A teacher should be careful in this matter, and should study clearness of expression so that he can express his ideas in such terms as his pupils can understand.

Some have a long tedious style of expression, which lessens the clearness of the subject. It is similar to the case of a queen bee who is hid by the swarm, so the precise fact is hid from the understanding by the multiplicity of words. Sentences should be short but explicit. No teacher should swell his propositions to an enormous size by explications, exceptions and precautions. He should disentangle and divide his thoughts, that too many may not be crowded into one paragraph.

One great error is in speaking too fast. The teacher is the pattern for the pupils; if he speaks fast so will they, and, as it is the tendency of pupils to hurry through their sentences, the teacher should endeavor to counteract this. The result of too fast speaking is bad pronunciation and indistinctness of utterance—two great faults.

To overcome these errors and gain a proper style, the teacher should accustom himself to read those authors who think and write with great clearness, such as convey their ideas into the understanding as fast as the eye can run over the sentence. This will give the basis for a proper mode of communicating ideas to the youthful mind.

He should get a distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the subjects which he teaches; the tongue will very easily clothe these ideas in a proper manner.

"Good teaching from good knowledge springs;
Words will make haste to follow things."