

4. It is to me, therefore, a source of inexpressible satisfaction to know that while "clouds and darkness" of unprecedented opposition surrounded me while promoting this my last act of school legislation, an almost cloudless sky of general approval attends its introduction throughout the land; and I am persuaded that approval will strengthen into high satisfaction with the law, and a strong determination to maintain it, as soon as its advantages shall have been more fully experienced.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

5. But it is proper for me to notice objections which have been made to certain steps which have been taken to give effect to the new School Act. These objections relate almost entirely to the high standard which is alleged to have been fixed for giving certificates to teachers, and the expressed belief that many schools will have to be closed for want of legally qualified teachers. When I state, as I shall presently explain, that I have provided that not a single school throughout the land shall be closed for want of a legally qualified teacher, and yet without lowering the standard of regular certificates, it will be seen at once how imaginary are the forebodings of certain newspapers and their sympathizing correspondents.

6. Let us now look at the facts of the whole case. It is admitted on all hands, and it was so admitted in the Legislature when the new School Act was a Bill under consideration, that the standard of Public School Teachers' qualifications was too low; that the examinations of teachers by the "County Boards of Public Instruction" were inefficient and unsatisfactory; some called them "shams" and "farces," with very few exceptions; all admitted that whatever good these County Boards, as then constituted, had done in the infancy of our school system, they had, in the majority of instances, long outlived their usefulness, either in elevating the qualifications of teachers, or in promoting the efficiency or permanence of the teacher's profession, and that some change was necessary.

7. It was, furthermore, alleged, that undue partiality had been shown in granting Provincial Certificates to students of the Normal School, who were no better qualified than many First Class County Board Teachers, and that these were quite as worthy of a Provincial Certificate as First Class Normal School Teachers. Though I knew the imputation and statement to be utterly unfounded, I concurred in the principle involved in it: namely, that all those teachers throughout the land who are equally well qualified with Normal School Teachers who have received First and Second Class Provincial Certificates, are entitled to Certificates of the same class, and should have the earliest and all possible facilities to obtain them. Accordingly I recommended to the Council of Public Instruction the appointment of a Committee of Examiners, composed of most able and experienced teachers, and wholly unconnected with the Normal School. I first proposed that one and the same set of examination papers for First and Second Class Certificates for Normal School Teachers and other teachers throughout the Province, with the same values of answers to questions; but it was objected, that, as the sessional examination of Normal School Teachers would take place several weeks earlier than the examination of teachers in the various counties, the papers would become known. My answer was, that I thought this could be prevented by proper precautions, but that if, in some instances, any of the questions should become known to candidates, it would be to the comparative disadvantage of the Normal School candidates, and to the corresponding advantage of non-Normal School candidates for Certificates. But my recommendation was overruled, when I suggested to the Examiners that they would make the papers for the examination of teachers in the counties somewhat easier than those which had been used in the examination of Normal School Teachers. This, I have been assured, has been done, and that no questions have been given the answers to which are not contained in the text-books prescribed for teaching in the public schools; and it may be shown by comparing the Normal School Examination Papers, published in my last Annual School Report, with the examination papers recently used in the County Board examinations, and which are being prepared in sets for distribution, and which will be published in the *Journal of Education* and in my forthcoming Annual School Report, for as general information as possible.

8. Now, what is the result? The result is, that but fourteen candidates have presented themselves in all the counties of the Province for examination for First Class Certificates, and a surprisingly small number of candidates for Second Class Certificates, more than half of whom have failed in the examinations. A majority of more than three-fourths of the candidates have presented themselves for Third Class Certificates. Of these, a large number had held First Class County Board Certificates, but many of them are reported to have failed in their examinations for Third Class Cer-

tificates. These facts not only authorize the statement, but furnish the most complete demonstration of the injustice of the attacks upon the Normal School system, and of the utter defectiveness of the former County Board examinations of teachers.

9. It now happens that the very parties who have heretofore been most vociferous as to the equal qualifications of First Class County Board Teachers with First Class Normal School Teachers, now complain that the standard of examinations for Certificates has been suddenly raised too high, in consequence of which many worthy teachers will be disqualified, and many schools must be closed for want of legally qualified teachers. My answer is, that the standard for Provincial Certificates has not been raised at all, but is the same (with some mitigation) as that which has been required in giving Provincial Certificates to Normal School Teachers; and the standard of examinations for Third Class County Certificates is the same as that required merely for admission to the Normal School. The simple fact is, that these examinations are now made realities, and not what the Brockville Recorder and others have called the old County Board examinations—"shams" and "farces." I am sure that no intelligent man, after examining the programmes for the examinations for even the First and Second Class Provincial Certificates, will say that they are in any respect too high for life-certificates of teachers of schools, for the support of which all classes of the community are taxed, and on which they are chiefly depending for the education of their children; and I am persuaded that in less than three years, a sufficient number of teachers will become regularly qualified, under these programmes, to supply all the Public Schools of the country, without requiring temporary certificates at all, except in a few and rare instances.

10. But it is said, "You are, in the meantime, shutting up many schools for want of teachers." I answer, not so; for, though a County Inspector has not authority to give temporary certificates to rejected candidates, nor have I authority to authorize him to do so, yet he can do so on the recommendation, or with the consent of a majority of his fellow-Examiners of the County Board, as, in such cases, though the candidates have failed in their recent examinations, they may not be considered as having been absolutely rejected, when the Examiners recommend temporary certificates to be granted to them. But, in addition, the County Inspector can give temporary certificates to other applicants whom he may find qualified to teach particular schools that might not otherwise be supplied. In this way, not a single school need be closed for want of a legally qualified teacher; and the regular standard of qualifications can be maintained, until teachers become qualified according to it in sufficient numbers to supply all the schools. It is also to be remarked, that the certificates heretofore given by County Boards are perpetuated according to the terms of them, and are not affected by any failures of the holders of them at the recent examinations—not even those certificates given during the pleasure of the Board, as no Board has been authorized to cancel any such certificates. But it is manifest that a Third Class Certificate under the new system signifies more, and is of more value than a First Class old County Board Certificate.

11. It is, however, objected again, "It is hard for old teachers to be set aside, because they cannot qualify under the new system." I answer, as government exists not for office-holders, but for the people, so the schools exist not for the teachers, but for the youth and future generations of the land; and if teachers have been too slothful not to keep pace with the progressive wants and demands of the country, they must, as should all incompetent and indolent public officers, and all lazy and unenterprising citizens, give place to the more industrious, intelligent, progressive and enterprising. The sound education of a generation of children is not to be sacrificed for the sake of an incompetent though antiquated teacher.

12. But under the new Act additional provision is made which will more than double the fund for the assistance of disabled or worn-out teachers of public schools. Among the clergy of different religious persuasions, funds are established by required subscriptions for their relief or partial support in old age. In the Wesleyan body, for example, every one of the (now six hundred) ministers is required to pay five dollars per annum towards the support of superannuated ministers and their widows—a regulation which has been in force more than a quarter of a century. In the Civil Service in England, from two to five per cent. is deducted from the annual salary of each officer or clerk in the employment of Government towards the support of such officers and clerks in old age. The same principle is embodied in the School Act by requiring each licensed male public teacher to pay four dollars per annum into a fund for the support of superannuated teachers. In case a teacher dies, the whole amount of his subscription, with interest at the rate of seven per cent., is paid back to his widow or legal representative. If a teacher becomes superannuated, he receives a pension in pro-