

for so important an office as that of County Inspector were something like an insult. And, in the second place, a graduate, were it certain that his acquirements are ever so high, is not necessarily, even though he may have taught in a school for three years, acquainted with the organization of Public Schools, and with the methods of teaching, which should be followed there. The examination, which he passed before receiving a degree, did not extend to these points, while first-class Public School teachers have been examined on them more than once. Where is the hardship, then, of his being asked to write a thesis, showing that he has, at least, had his attention called to the subject?

I cannot doubt that the resolution of the Council to grant certificates of qualification to those Public School teachers only, who are in the highest grade of the first class, will meet with the approval of all who are in a position to give an impartial opinion. Apart from the unseemliness of having a school inspected by a gentleman whose certificate might be of an inferior grade to that held by the teacher of the school, the effect of throwing the office of Inspector open to any Public School teachers, except those who are at the head of their profession, would be to lower the general character of the office, and so to hinder the attainment of the ends for which County Inspectorships were instituted. We look for great things from the Inspectors. We expect them to be the means of reviving the Public Schools, and advancing them to the highest possible state of efficiency. That they may be able to render such a service, they must be men whom teachers and trustees and ratepayers everywhere will look up to with respect, whose counsel will be sought with confidence, whose approbation will be valued, and for whose blame reverence will be felt; but it would be foolish to expect County Inspectors as a body to answer this description, if persons were admitted to the Inspectorships who were not competent to take a first-class certificate of the highest grade.

THE EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

Next in importance to the clauses of the School Act establishing County Inspectorships, are those which relate to the examination of teachers.

Scarcely anything has in time past been felt to be a more serious evil, by those who have interested themselves in the working of our educational system, than the want of uniformity in the examination and classification of teachers. When I was Inspector of Grammar Schools, I heard the complaint frequently made, that a candidate, who found it difficult to obtain a third-class certificate from one Board, might without difficulty get a second or first-class certificate from another. This disparity in the standards set up by different Boards, besides giving rise to numerous cases of individual dissatisfaction, tended to bring down the general standard of qualification, and threw suspicion on the value of the certificates held even by first and second-class teachers who had fairly won the position that had been assigned to them. The provisions which the new Act makes, with the view of remedying the evil referred to, are as follows: First-class certificates are henceforth to be given only by the Council of Public Instruction; and second and third-class certificates only by County Boards of Examiners. The papers for second and third-class certificates, as well as for first, are to be prepared by the Council of Public Instruction, through a committee of their appointment or otherwise; so that candidates for second and third-class certificates, though presenting themselves before different Boards, shall still have the same papers to answer. Moreover, by a regulation of the Council of Public Instruction, the value of the several questions in the examination papers must be fixed by the Committee of Council; the effect of which is, that all candidates for certificates of a particular class, who give correct answers to the questions in the examination papers, must receive the same number of marks for the answers, by whatever Board they may be examined.

It is perhaps not possible, in the meantime, to go further than this, in the way of securing uniformity in the examination and classification of Public School teachers. Of course, even where examination papers are the same, and the values affixed to the several questions are also the same, there may still be a serious want of uniformity in the examinations, in consequence of the different estimates which different examiners make of imperfect answers. In estimating imperfect answers, some of the County Boards, which have to decide the fate of applicants for second and third-class certificates, will be much more severe than others, and thus the ideal of absolute uniformity in the examination and classification of teachers will not by any means be attained. I was at one time disposed to think that County Boards of Examiners might be dispensed with, and certificates of all classes, first, second and third, granted by one examining body. This would secure uniformity as far as such a theory is possible; it would probably

not involve much more expense than is entailed by the present system; and it would be objected to on the ground of centralization by those only who allow their ears to be filled with a popular cry, and do not consider that centralization, which separates examiners from local partialities and suggestions, is, in such a matter, the very thing to be desired. But, after what I have learned of the number of applicants likely to come forward from year to year for second and third-class certificates, I do not see how a single small committee could overtake the work of reading all the papers that would be given in. I acquiesce, therefore, in the method of examining and classifying teachers now prescribed by law, as perhaps the best attainable in present circumstances.

The examining committee, appointed by the Council of Public Instruction, consists of a member of the Council, who is chairman of the committee, and of the two High School Inspectors. Besides a special examination for certificates of qualification for the office of Public School Inspector, the committee has recently had to conduct, with the assistance of the Normal School Masters, the examination of both divisions of the Normal School, and it is at present engaged with the general examination of candidates for first-class certificates throughout the Province. In this general examination the Normal School Masters take no part. Though, as a member of the Council, I accepted these arrangements as suitable to the transition year through which the school system is passing, I think that, in future, it would be better if the Normal School Masters had nothing whatever to do with the examination of candidates for teachers' certificates. There are undoubtedly some advantages in teachers having a share in the examination of their pupils, but these, in the present instance, are far more than outweighed by the imperative necessity which exists that no one set of applicants for a certificate of a particular class should be subjected to a different ordeal from another, and also that no possible whisper of partiality on the part of a teacher to his own pupils should go abroad. This necessity is now more imperative than ever, inasmuch as both second and first-class certificates have a greater value than formerly; second-class certificates having been made permanent during the good behaviour of the holders, and valid in all the municipalities of the Province; and a first-class certificate of the highest grade rendering the holder eligible for the office of Public School Inspector. My opinion, therefore, is clear, that Normal School Masters should not have a place in the future on the examining committee; and not only so, but also, that, if possible, there should be but one examination for the pupils of the Normal School, and for other applicants for Teachers' certificates.

In fact, the way seems to have been paved for this, however unintentionally, by the recent School Act. The clause of the Act, which provides that second-class certificates shall be granted only by County Boards, applies, I presume, to Normal School students as well as to other persons; and hence those Normal School students, forming the majority of the whole, who do not aspire to more than second-class certificates, must appear before County Boards for examination, along with other applicants for certificates. It is true that an understanding might be come to with County Boards to issue certificates to Normal School students on the ground of examinations conducted by the Committee of the Council of Public Instruction; this, I suppose, would be consistent with the statute; but is scarcely what the Statute contemplated, and I am convinced that the Council of Public Instruction will not think of such an arrangement. If the larger division of Normal School pupils must thus necessarily attend the County Board examinations, why may not the other and smaller division attend the same examinations? It would be for their own advantage to do so; for, should a Normal School student be examined merely by a Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, and fail to obtain a first-class certificate, he could not receive a second-class certificate; the Council having no power to issue such a document; but, by presenting himself before a County Board, he might, in the event of his failing to obtain a first-class certificate from the Council, receive a second-class from the Board.

INSPECTION OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS—CLASSIFICATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS—APPORTIONMENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRANT.

I now pass to the subject of High School Inspection.

Increased provision for the inspection of the High Schools is undoubtedly required to be made. The task of visiting, twice a year, more than a hundred schools scattered over the Province, is too heavy to be laid on the shoulders of any one man; and (what is of more consequence) the Council of Public Instruction was unable, so long as there was but one inspector, to frame suitable regulations for the apportionment of the High School fund among the different schools. In the last two reports which I had the honour, as Grammar School Inspector, of giving in to the Chief Superintendent, I showed that the effect of apportioning the Government