

## JUSTICE OF PENSIONING TEACHERS.

It may be urged that pensioning teachers savors too much of paternalism, and that the teacher should be paid a salary sufficient for his present wants and to enable him to save for the future. The teacher, like the pastor, must devote his life for the good of his fellow-beings, and therefore he is withdrawn from many active phases of life which would enable him to make and save money; he does not acquire business habits, nor does he have business opportunities that other men do. It seems that this must always be so if the teacher, like the pastor, is to be of greatest use to the community. Therefore let the state, which the teacher serves, do for him what the church, which the pastor serves, does for him. All churches have funds for the help of their old pastors who have given their lives for her; let the state do the same for the teachers who just as truly have devoted their lives for its interests.

Pensions are just to the teacher, and the state should recognize this obligation, thereby assuring its servants in their old age from want, and showing proper appreciation of a class of men and women who perhaps have done more than any other class in the establishment of the foundations of the state, which in a republic are laid in the intelligence and morality of its citizens.

**School Examinations.**

Much has been said for and against examinations as an educational means to an end, and there is no doubt that many pertinent things difficult to answer can be brought forward to show their inefficiency as tests of a student's ability in its highest sense. At the same time, however, there is no doubt that, until something better is found to take their place, examinations must form an element of every efficient system of instruction; for the object of instruction is not merely to place knowledge before a pupil, but also to see that he grasps the knowledge so presented to him and understands it aright. It is in this last connection that the usefulness of examinations is apparent. But there is another purpose which these so-called inquisitions are made to serve: they are frequently, perhaps always, for it is difficult to eliminate the competitive element, considered as tests of superiority. Though this latter element is not to be considered as the better one, there must be a judicious admixture of the two in every properly conducted examination. For, taking human nature into account, some advantage must attend success if the energies of the candidates are to be incited to their fullest.

Among the various school studies, it will be readily seen that some are better adapted for purposes of examination than others. For instance, in the case of subjects like classics or mathematics, where the pupil is required to do something, an examination is nearly always a good test; while in the case of others, such as

history or geography, where it is a matter rather of memory, unless the questions are well selected they are of little practical value. Yet, even in such subjects, an experienced and ingenious examiner can set a paper that will be a fair test of the candidate's thoroughness of preparation. And here, more than anywhere else, perhaps, should be tested their knowledge of English composition and grammar. Lists of names, of kings or battles, of rivers or lakes, should be asked for in moderation, and should be replaced by short essays on topics connected with the subjects under discussion, the accuracy of the facts given being also taken into account in making the awards.

An examiner such as has just been referred to, never stoops to the perhaps too common practice of asking about unimportant things little likely to be known, or of giving prominence to details best left in books, to be sought there when wanted. In other words, he does not ask "catch questions."

One of the things often urged against the efficiency of examinations in general, is the fact that many pupils have a happy faculty for "getting up" just what is required shortly before the examination. It is said that they derive no benefit therefrom. No doubt there are such pupils, and, more than that, there are teachers who, having, as it were, made a special study of the chances of examinations, are able to "get up" a whole class for the ordeal, and have them pass with flying colors. But this is not altogether the fault of the examination, and even this aptitude is not without its value, for it shows a power of acquisition and retentiveness not to be entirely overlooked.

In spite, then, of all that can be said, not without some truth, to the contrary, examinations are valuable in at least three particulars. First, they act as stimulants to the doing of good work, though, of course, a danger lies here that scarcely needs pointing out. Second, they set a standard which may serve as a guide to a conception of what learning really is, hence that standard must not be too low. Then, most important of all, they incite the pupil to learn how best to produce his acquired knowledge, and how to express himself in a correct and logical manner. *Educational Record.*

**A Pessimistic View.**

From my own weaknesses, from what I know personally of teachers, and from what I read in educational papers, it seems to me that there is no other great profession in which, as among teachers, there are so many persons unintelligent of the real principles involved. We enter into the most risky of all callings with a jaunty assurance; we are confident that our common sense will carry us through; we feel that there is no competent judge about to estimate our work; we spoil and mangle; we dawdle and palaver; children grow in spite of our labors, not because of them. If the secret history of school management could be written, what a perfect record of stupidity, ignorance and nonsense would not my past (and present, maybe) and yours disclose? *N. O. McAndrew in School Journal.*