

These are right in their place, they have their place, but how infinitely better is that plan of bringing before the study of the pupils all the great possibilities resulting from illimitable resources and a vigorous climate—a land peculiarly adapted to grow *men*—to hold before the pupils the future of such a land, such a people. Taking for details subjects that are found in such glowing descriptions as I am going to repeat, what girl, what boy, will not find all the spirit within him roused to that pitch where men willingly lay down their lives to preserve their land, the fairest under heaven's blue sky.

"I call it a northern nation, for such it must become. Men do not talk on this continent of changes wrought by centuries, but of the events of years. Men do not vegetate in this age, as they did formerly, in one spot, occupying one portion. Thought outruns the steamcar, and hope outflies the telegraph. We live more in ten years in this era than the patriarch did in a thousand. The patriarch might outlive the palm tree which was planted to commemorate his birth, and yet not see so many wonders as we may witness in a decade. What marvels have not been wrought in Europe and America in twenty years! And who can say the world, or our own portion of it more particularly, is incapable of maintaining to the end of the century the ratio of the past progress? I for one cannot presume to say so. I look to the future of my country with hope, though not without anxiety. I see in the not remote distance one great nationality bound, like the shield of Achilles, by the blue rim of ocean. I see it quartered into many communities, each disposing of its internal affairs, but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse, and free commerce. I see within the round of that shield the peaks of the Western mountains, and the crests of the Eastern waves, the winding Assiniboine, the five-fold lakes, the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, the St. John, and the basin of Minas. By all these flowing waters, in all the valleys they fertilize, in all the cities they visit in their course, I see a generation of industrious, contented, moral men, free in name and in fact—men capable of maintaining a constitution worthy of such a country."

#### THE LIMITING OF TEACHERS' CERTIFICATES.\*

I MAY tell you at the outset that I am very strongly opposed to the present system of limiting Teachers' Certificates. I am aware that it is a delicate, if not dangerous, thing to oppose long established customs or laws; that questions of a revolutionary character should be approached with caution, still my convictions are of no mushroom growth. They are deep rooted and having put my hand to the plough I will not turn back.

As first-class teachers have prepared, or are preparing themselves for a higher grade of work than that belonging to the Public School, my remarks are not intended to apply to them, unless they choose to remain within the domain of the Public School Teacher.

I hope to be able, as I think I shall be, to show you that the present law, with respect to the limiting of certificates, is both unfair and absurd. But in any comparisons made between those of the Third Class and those of the Second, let it be borne in mind, that I have no intention to cast the slight-reflection upon the latter. My only purpose is to point out as clearly as possible a most serious disadvantage and wrong under which the Thirds labor, to show whence these troubles arise, and to suggest a remedy.

According to the School law, what is the real difference between the qualifications of those holding Third Class Certificates and those holding Second Class Certificates? And what is the difference in the treatment meted out to those teachers? The Third may have made high marks at his examination, and yet, he is limited to three years. The Second may have made low marks, but he is permitted to teach for a lifetime. I admit that the latter has covered a little more ground than the former, and that he has gone a little deeper into some subjects, but for all practical work of the school-room their qualifications are not widely different. Is there then, I ask, any just comparison

between the educational requirements of the two, the fetters placed upon the Thirds, and the freedom accorded the Seconds? With only a moderate difference in their qualifications there is an almost unbounded difference in the privileges granted.

But it is sometimes said that the present system of limiting certificates begets ambition in Third Class Teachers. At one of the meetings of the International Convention, held in Toronto last year, the Hon. Minister of Education, when speaking of the school system of Ontario, said of teachers holding Third Class Certificates, that those among them who lacked the ambition to rise higher had their heads lopped off into the waste paper basket at the end of three years. As I understand this it is virtually an assertion that the Third who does not become at least a Second is without ambition. Now, upon what ground did the Hon. Minister make that statement? How does he know the history of each teacher in this Province? How does he know the disadvantages with which each student has been obliged to contend, the obstacles that have lain in his way, the privations he has endured to obtain even a Third Class position? There was certainly an attempt to be funny; but, to me, the utterance was a poor sample of wit. At the same time I thought it unfounded, in fact unkind and offensive. Well, coming back directly to the contention that the limiting of the Thirds makes them ambitious, we may ask what kind of ambition is meant? Is it an ambition to excel as teachers? An ambition that enables them to come before their critics and friends with a consciousness of having done their duty? Is it an ambition to be highly esteemed? An ambition that leads to noble resolves and energetic action? No, that cannot be the ambition said to be created and fostered by the limiting process. If that laudable ambition, to which reference has been made, may be satisfied, and so annulled, by obtaining a Second Class Certificate, then it would be well to wipe out the Seconds rather than lose the ambition. But no, that is an ambition which may be lessened, partially deadened or smothered, but it cannot be destroyed. It is inborn and will last as long as life lasts. It depends, let us be thankful, upon no human law. Consequently those who plead for the present limitation of teachers' certificates can, by ambition, mean nothing better than a mere desire to save oneself from the miserable law that now blots our statutes.

Again, compare the manner of judging the fitness of the Thirds, and the treatment subsequently meted out to them, with the manner of judging the fitness of those of other professions or callings and the treatment afterwards given to them. We shall find the one sadly out of joint with the many. The law student goes up for his examination, and having succeeded is allowed to practice his profession in our courts. No matter how low the marks he may make, so long as he obtains the requisite number, he is not told that at the end of three years his head must go to swell the refuse heap. The doctor may have graduated low in his class, yet no three-year limit is applied to him. He is not decapitated, at any time, regardless of his success or want of success. And the same line of argument applies to the druggist, book-keeper, salesman, to the conductor who has charge of a railway train, to the engineer upon the locomotive, and to the mechanics of the various trades. But when we come to Third Class Teachers the whole scene changes. They, we are to suppose, are a peculiar people—a unique class in this great world of humanity—and cannot be treated as other classes. The Third may have well earned his certificate, he may have been a most successful teacher, but at the expiration of three years off comes his head. And this, we are to understand, is partly, at least, for the purpose of making him ambitious. Well, I think that the man or woman whom such treatment would make ambitious might be profitably exhibited as a living curiosity. Yes, the law would have us believe that the Third, no matter what his care or application in the pursuit of his profession, is, at last, hopelessly lost in the mazy labyrinth of dunce-land; and he is treated accordingly.

Now, I hold that the teacher who was qualified three years ago, and has since been honestly engaged in his profession, is better qualified now than when he first received his certificate; but that if he is not qualified now, he most assuredly was unqualified when his certificate was granted him.

And these things being true, those who plead that the present limiting system may continue have put themselves in a sorry plight. They are guilty either of defaming the teachers, or of misleading the public. If he was qualified when he received his certificate, and has since kept himself abreast of the times, then those responsible for annulling his certificate and thus of representing him as unqualified, should be prosecuted for libel. On the other hand, if he is not qualified now, then he was not at the time of his examination, and those responsible for sending him forth as a teacher have been guilty of misleading the public—of causing a misappropriation of public funds—and should be indicted for fraud. On one or the other horn of the dilemma they are impaled.

And, now, before leaving my subject I will suggest certain changes which I think it would be wise to make. Let all teachers new to the profession start out on a probationary course of three or four years, and after that let the perpetuity of their certificates, as of others, depend upon the ability of the holders as teachers, their standing to be judged by reports from the inspectors, trustees, and from themselves. These reports should be prepared, in blank, by a board of Public school inspectors and Public school teachers, while the same board should receive the reports and decide upon the merits of those engaged in the profession. The result of the test should be published each year, that the teachers might know how they were estimated by their peers, and that the public might know who were the most worthy. Then the present law would be found only in history as a relic of past stupidity and injustice. In place of the discouragements, the shackles, and the lulling of the Seconds into repose, a healthy stimulus would be given to action; more life and energy would be carried into the school-room; the teaching profession would rise to a higher plane, and bear fruit in a more rapid educational development of our pupils.

#### Book Notices, etc.

Any book here reviewed sent post-paid on receipt of price. Address The Grip Printing & Publishing Co., Toronto.

*Epochs of American History. The Colonies, 1492-1750.* By R. G. Thwaites. Pp. 300, 4 maps. Longmans & Co.

The three volumes of this series form a history of the United States, comprehensive yet compact, containing a clear outline which traces the development of ideas and institutions; and giving a bibliography which will enable the reader to track down any special detail. Such is the claim of the preface, and it seems to be fairly well founded. The struggle for civil and religious liberty is told in a simple, impressive style.

*Public School History of England and Canada.*

By W. J. Robertson. Pp. 273. Price, 30c. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co.

The writer of a summary of history such as the one before us, has very narrow limits within which to win success. He is not expected to be a historian but a compiler, hence we expect merely a fair presentation of the results of the most careful historical investigation. If we find these stated briefly, and in such a way as to awaken some love of history in the child's mind, the author has achieved success. This, in the main, we think Mr. Robertson has done. His book tells the story of England and Canada, fairly and impartially, and in words which children can readily understand. At times the language becomes picturesque and forcible, approaching to something like style. The volume is consequently a manifest improvement on the late *P. S. History*, and will be found we believe, generally acceptable to the teachers of history in our schools. We cannot but express our regret that the book is not embellished with more and better illustrations; in this respect it is antiquated even now when compared, for example, with the fascinating pages of histories of the United States published by Ginn or Harpers.

Several minor errors that disfigure the present

\*A PAPER, by Mr. D. C. White, read before the Norfolk Teachers' Institute, held in Simcoe, on Oct. 20th and 21st, and published by request.