

tions further prescribe the specific duties of assistant teachers, and declare that in every school, where the number of pupils on the roll exceeds fifty, an assistant teacher shall be employed.

Overlooking the words of the Statute and the general regulations, Trustees, in some cases, object to the Programme as beyond the capacity of third-class teachers, and argue that as the subjects prescribed for the examination of third-class teachers are much below those required by law to be taught in the Public Schools, it is both anomalous and unjust to require their third-class teacher to teach them. They say: "We are authorized to employ third-class teachers for our School, and yet you require these teachers to teach subjects with which they are wholly unacquainted, and in which they themselves are not required to pass an examination."

We have already answered these objections, and have shown that, according to the letter of the Statute, Trustees are required to employ more than one teacher in every School. We have also shown that the regulations provide for the employment of a master and an assistant or assistants, and prescribe a programme of studies which this master and his assistant shall teach, in order to afford to every child in a Section an education suitable, &c., in the various branches of instruction prescribed by the Statute.

To admit these objections as valid would be to declare that no child shall receive an education beyond that which a third-class teacher may be able to give! This would, indeed, be an absurdity, as well as a gross injustice to the pupils in our Schools. This, also, as we have shown, was neither the intention of the Legislature, nor the spirit or provisions of the law and regulations which were framed to give effect to that intention. In nearly every school there are advanced pupils (or would soon be, if proper teachers were employed). According to the theory advanced by some trustees, these pupils must remain satisfied with the meagre education which third-class teachers can give them, and be denied that better education which the law secures to them, and for which their parents pay rates. Third-class teachers may be competent to teach the first and second and possibly the third classes in a school, but they are not qualified, and should not be employed to teach the fourth, fifth, and sixth classes. They can, therefore, only be useful as assistant teachers.

Formerly (under the School Law of 1850) County Boards of Examiners were required, in the issue of third-class certificates, to limit them to a particular School Section (on the application of Trustees), where the pupils were quite young, or were not far advanced. Under the present law, this restriction was removed; but in its place other provisions were introduced, which were designed to give greater facilities for the more thorough instruction of all the pupils of a School Section in the various subjects of a good English education, which the Legislature itself had declared to be necessary.

It would certainly be a singular anomaly for the Legislature, on the one hand, to determine that certain higher subjects of instruction be introduced into our Public Schools, and then declare that incompetent persons should be legally qualified to teach them. The law and regulations must be taken as a whole, and their symmetry and completeness must not be destroyed by giving a forced construction to one part alone.

The following article will give additional information on this subject:—

ADEQUATE ACCOMMODATION AND ASSISTANT TEACHERS.

In reply to a communication from a Trustee, on these subjects, the Chief Superintendent has sent the following reply:—

"The second section of the School Act of 1871 provides that 'Each school corporation shall provide adequate accommodation for all children of school age in their school division or municipality.' The seventeenth section of the Consolidated School Act authorise the trustees of each school section to see that the school under their charge is conducted according to the authorised regulations.' The seventh of the authorised regulations says: 'When the pupils in a school amount to more than fifty, and less than one hundred, the trustees must employ an additional teacher as an assistant.'

"Such are the provisions of the law, which it is my duty to see executed by all parties concerned. It is thus seen that the trustees of your school section are required to provide adequate school accommodation, not for the number that may be in the school for the time being, but for 'all the children of school age' in your section. The law makes the school free to all; requires the attendance of all, at least, one-third of the year; assumes that all may be present at one time, at least, a part of the year.

"In examining the returns, I find that the number of children reported of school age in your section in 1872 was 129, with 112 names on the school register the first half of the present year, although average attendance is only little more than half that number—

certainly a great shame to the managers of the school, whose neglect of adequate accommodation or adequate teaching must cause indifference and neglect in the attendance of pupils. I find by the returns that your school-house is 48 by 30 in the clear in the inside—affording sufficient space for all the children of school age in your section, if properly arranged, and for two teachers, if divided into two rooms, as so large a school-house ought to be.

"I can find no reasons in your letter that would justify me in not insisting upon the execution of the law in your section as in other sections much less favourably situated and much less wealthy than yours. You and your trustee colleagues are certainly bound by law, as well as by a consideration of the interests of the children under your official charge, to employ a second or assistant teacher. I observe that you speak of the average attendance of pupils; but that is not the law which speaks not of the average attendance, but of the 'number of pupils in a school;' and this is determined, not by the average attendance, but by the number of pupils on the school register. It is possible that trustees, from mercenary or other unworthy considerations, may keep the average attendance of pupils low by not providing adequate teaching or school accommodation for a large number; but the number of children whose names are on the School Register show the number of children whose parents wish to have them taught in the school, and for whose teaching and accommodation the trustees are bound to provide, under pecuniary penalties equal to the amount of the school money lost to their section by their neglect, besides being liable to prosecution for damages by any parent whose children or child is not provided with the legally required means of school teaching and school accommodation.

"Experience shows that trustees in rural sections who provide proper teachers and proper accommodations will secure an average attendance of nearly, and in some instances quite three-fourths of the children of school age in their division. Trustees who neglect their duty, not only violate the law and the public trust committed to them, and incur a pecuniary penalty, but they do a great and irreparable wrong to the rising generation, whose interests they have been elected to protect and promote, and for the sacrifice of which no money can ever compensate."

I. Papers on the Teachers' Examinations.

1. PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' EXAMINATIONS.

There is undoubtedly an impression to some extent prevalent among the public that the examination of Public School Teachers under the new regulations is unnecessarily strict and severe, and much displeasure is expressed by some good people, that so very small a proportion of the numerous candidates who flock to the half yearly examination succeed in obtaining certificates. It is undoubtedly a subject of just regret that our young people are not better instructed, and this regret is fully shared by the members of the Board.

In the County of Oxford the number of applicants for second-class certificates was six; only five, however, put in an appearance. One of these retired at the close of the first day, finding he was not equal to the exercises required in Arithmetic, and all the remainder at the close of the third day followed his example. To one of these, however, a third-class certificate was granted.

In the third class there were fifty-six applicants, of whom seven failed to appear. The total aggregate number of marks possible in this class was 1,185. Of these 50 per cent., or 593 marks, were required to pass, and thirteen obtained the required number.

The highest number of marks obtained by any of the failing candidates was 582—six ranged below that number down to 550—eight below the latter number down to 500—three from that down to 450—eight between 450 and 400—nine between the last number and 300—and one as low as 184.

It has been stated, in explanation of this not very reputable state of things, that many young persons present themselves for Examination without any expectation of passing, but come up, so to speak, to get their measure taken, that they may know what their intellectual standing is. This may display a very laudable ambition on the part of the applicants, but it is a practice that ought not to be encouraged, and it might be well for the Board to adopt some sort of test by which all would be excluded except such as really intend to enter the profession.

It is very much to be regretted, that most of those candidates who fail at a given Examination, and afterwards renew the attempt, not only fail again, and in some cases repeatedly, but, what is worse, many of them do not appear to have made any material advancement in the interval.