

of prize-giving which I have had ample opportunity of examining, and I can speak both of its immediate and more remote consequences with assurance.

Since the true aim of prize-giving is to inspire all, but specially apathetic and lazy pupils, with a willingness to work, and that energetically, it is evident that, first, the prize offered must be one which will possess value in the estimation of those to whom it is held out; second, that every pupil must be made to feel that he has a chance to win it; that a lazy pupil, who persists in his indolence, shall have no chance of winning it; and, further, as it is desirable to secure all this without at the same time giving any ground or excuse for hard feeling, it is evident that each competitor must recognize the fact that he struggles to accomplish a certain amount of work, rather than to vanquish a fellow pupil.* How we may best secure the accomplishment of these ends is the problem which we essay to solve.

First—That the prizes may have value in the estimation of the pupils, let them consist of such articles as boys and girls fully appreciate. For the higher classes we might suggest such as the following—books, microscopes, telescopes, stereoscopes, magic lanterns, cameras, mathematical instruments, guns, watches, writing-desks, work-boxes, musical instruments, &c. For the juniors—kaleidoscopes, hand-sleighs, cricket-bats and balls, skates, and a hundred other things that boys and girls everywhere delight to possess.

Second—That every pupil may be made to feel that he has a chance to win the prize, let the prize be competed for not by the pupils of one school only, but let class two of each school in the township, or, far better, in the district, compete against class two of every other school in the district; and so with the other classes; and let the number of prizes offered in each class be at least equal to the number of pupils in that class, in the school which has the largest class of that particular name. For example, suppose ten schools compete, class two of the first school may contain seven pupils; class two of the other nine may contain 7, 6, 5, 7, 8, 6, 10, 10, and 11 pupils respectively; in all 77 pupils coming up for examination. In such a case I would offer at least eleven prizes, when though but one pupil in seven would carry off a prize, each of the 77 would feel during the year of work preceding the examination, that he was not without a good chance of taking some prize. For, instancing School No. 10, where class two was most numerous, while the best scholar in that class knew that his chance of taking one of eleven prizes was very good, the eleventh boy could not say that he had no hope, since, though every boy in his own class surpassed him, he might surpass every boy from the other strange schools; and, further, though the eleventh boy in a class has a very poor chance indeed against the first, he cannot say that his chances against the tenth, ninth, or even eighth and seventh boys are not very fair, provided that he be truly industrious. Thus every boy, down to the poorest in his class is incited to activity. Again, I would enact that no pupil who has once taken a prize should be allowed to compete a second time for a prize in the same class. This would really be no hardship, for the successful competitors would in nearly every instance be fit for immediate promotion to the class next higher. To prevent unfair play, it would be further necessary to procure uniform and perfect classification in the different schools; but this is the duty of the County Inspector, and may safely be left in his hands. That lazy and careless pupils may be made to feel that while they continue so they can have no chance of a prize, it is only necessary to limit the number of prizes judiciously; and that each competitor may feel that he strives to master a certain curriculum rather than to vanquish his fellow pupils, it must be understood that all pupils who obtain a certain per centage, e.g. 80 per cent., of the marks given at examination, shall receive prizes at least equal in value to the lowest prize regularly offered. To exemplify—we will suppose that the pupils of class two in all the schools of the district number 77; eleven prizes are offered absolutely, i.e. will certainly be awarded to the best eleven pupils who compete, although none should reach 80 per cent. of the marks, but every pupil who obtains 80 per cent. of the marks given, shall receive a prize at least equal to prize No. 10; thus a pupil not receiving a prize cannot say that he did not get it because some one else did, but because he had not accomplished the work assigned. In practice, if the examination were thorough, not more than ten per cent. of the applicants would be likely to reach 80 per cent. of the marks given, still, the principle above enunciated would hold good.

Again, class one in every school is far the largest in numbers, comprising, as it does, children from zero to the time they are qualified to leave the Second Reading Book, when they are supposed to have acquired not only the rudiments of writing, arithmetic and geography, but to be pretty fair readers and spellers. The pupils in this class commonly form from 40 to 50 per cent. of the school; and they are those whom it would be difficult, on account of age, &c., to bring to a central place for examination. To this class, the

plan sketched would prove difficult of application; but the knowledge that promotion to class two would qualify a child to enter the lists as a competitor for the public prize would be a very powerful stimulus to work for promotion.

For two reasons I would offer no prizes in special subjects; first, the object of a Public School education is not to educate one faculty at the expense of others, but to develop equally all the powers of the pupil; and the tendency of offering a special prize to the best Arithmetician for instance, is to frustrate this end by inducing pupils to neglect other branches for the sake of concentrating all the powers on one; second, the boy who ranks first in general proficiency is certain to carry off many, probably most, of the first and second prizes in special subjects, and thus the bulk of the prizes is taken by one, not to his discredit, but to the injury, because discouragement, of other members of his class who, ranking but little below him, get no prize at all. I would, therefore, offer all the prizes for General Proficiency, and regulate the number of them by the method already explained. In awarding prizes for General Proficiency, of course different subjects must be assigned values corresponding to their relative importance. I submit the following schedule.—Reading 100; Spelling 100; Etymology 70; Grammar (including Composition) 200; Arithmetic 200; Algebra 100; Geometry 100; Geography 80; Natural History 80; History 100; Writing 100; Natural Philosophy 100; Book-keeping 100.

I will now take the liberty of suggesting that the various Townships of this District unite with the village of Bracebridge in making appropriations for the purpose of forming a fund to be used in procuring prizes which shall be offered in the manner I have explained. An appropriation averaging \$20.00 from each municipality would enable the District to offer, with the Government addition of 100 per cent., prizes to the value of \$440.00. Say:—

Class VI.	4 prizes averaging	\$15 00 =	\$60 00
" V.	6 "	"	10 00 = 60 00
" IV.	10 "	"	7 50 = 75 00
" III.	12 "	"	6 00 = 72 00
" II.	15 "	"	5 00 = 75 00

\$342 00

This arrangement would leave \$98.00 in the hands of the committee for the purposes of furnishing prizes to such pupils is obtained over 80 per cent. of the work, but received none of the prizes on the above list. If it be worth our while to have Public Schools at all, it is worth while to encourage and stimulate them to vigorous working. The townships will average three schools each, at least, and by this plan, at an average cost to each school section of only \$6½, no less than four hundred and forty dollars worth of prizes are offered for competition. I sincerely trust that the various Municipal Councils of Muskoka will take up this matter in earnest, and in time to announce the prize list early in January, so that fully twelve months may be given for preparation in the different schools. The formation of a committee will rest with the councils interesting themselves in the scheme. The work of the committee will consist in setting exact limits to the work on which each class will be examined; specifying the prizes, their number and value; the percentage above which all will get prizes; the appointment of a Board of Examiners, and time and place of examination, which must be almost entirely written and cannot be well done in less than two full days; the drafting of rules to guide the examiner, &c.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rev. J. S. Cole, B.A., for valuable assistance given me in perfecting the system I have sketched—a system the maturing of which has cost me much thought, and is the result of seven years' experience in teaching.

*This is exactly the principle upon which the system of Merit Cards is used by the Education Department is based.—*Editor Journal of Education.*

3. REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION HELD ON THE EIGHTH, NINTH AND TENTH DECEMBER, 1874.

No. 380.]

COUNCIL ROOM,

EDUCATION OFFICE, December 8, 1874.

The Council met, pursuant to notice, at three o'clock p.m., the Very Reverend H. J. Grasett, B. D., in the chair.

Present.—The Chairman.

The Chief Superintendent of Education.

His Grace the Most Reverend J. J. Lynch, D.D.

The Venerable T. B. Fuller, D.D.

The Very Reverend W. Snodgrass, D.D.

The Reverend John Ambery, M. A.

The Reverend S. S. Nelles, D.D.