

for a man's entrance into life. Nevertheless, the teacher is interested in the question, for he is called upon to fulfil his office, no matter what the end may be, and he more than any other will be able to gauge the effects of the system.

A competitive examination for the civil service, for entrance into the army and navy, or for any public employment, I hold to be *absolutely useless* and perhaps *mischievous*, as *at present* conducted. These you will say are strong words, but I think strong words are needed when we contemplate the evils which are incidents of the system. I do not think we in Canada have as yet suffered from the system as England has done, but the example of England is so often taken for granted by us as a trustworthy guide that a word in season may not be amiss on this important question.

If we take appointments to the army and navy as examples, we find that, yearly, many hundred youths go up for examination while the appointments are about one in ten of the candidates. What is to become, what does become of the nine-tenths who fail? And be it understood that failure is no real disgrace in these examinations, for when the appointments are so few the mere fact that a man is the eleventh in a hundred should not be made to tell against his capacity. An examiner is not always infallible. The fact that some ninety out of a hundred have at very heavy expense devoted themselves to a special class of work under men who are proficient in the teaching of such specialties as are likely to prove effective in an examination, and that in the matter of *general training* they *must* be behind those whose minds have not been so bent, but whose faculties have been developed on a broader basis, is really a lamentable circumstance. But setting aside the failures and looking only to the winners in the race, what do we find? What is it reasonable to expect from men so selected? Is mental training of this cramped character what is wanted for the duties of life? Does a merchant, a manufacturer, a banker, an engineer, select his assistants by competition? If any of us wish to find men in our ordinary work of life, do we adopt this Chinese principle. No! we see the men and judge of their fitness by other incidents in addition to their mental attainments. Some of the most highly gifted "servants" would make very poor men of business. In fact, it is rare to find men eminent for book learning capable of managing the ordinary business of life. The