

critical, I may be forgetting that we must not upon this continent and amongst the classes from which University and Departmental candidates are chiefly recruited expect that purity of diction which is supposed to be one of the marks of so-called "higher education;" all this I may be forgetting, but what I am not forgetting is that four-fifths of such candidates will one day be, or now actually are, *teachers*.

Second, then, as to the efficiency of the educational machinery of the Province, as tested by the recent examinations. It runs too smoothly. What do I mean by "too smoothly"? I mean that there are too many inducements held out to the youth of both sexes in Ontario to enter upon studies for which the majority of them (I by no means say all) are by nature and circumstances wholly unfitted. I mean that young men who ought to be following the plough and the harrow, and young women who ought to be in the kitchen and the dairy, are tempted into paths of life which they are utterly incompetent to tread. Knowledge—intelligence, even—is not the sole requisite for a teacher. Demeanour, breeding, manner, culture, refinement—one and all of these are as requisite; and can any one, even the most prejudiced, in his heart of hearts believe that the obtaining of thirty-three and a third per cent. will endow any candidate with these? And how are our youths tempted into what they style the "teaching profession"? By small fees, by bonuses, by emulous headmasters, by pushing teachers, by easy examinations, by lenient examiners, and, above and beyond all, *by the competition between schools*. Many are hurried on from one examination to another to feed the vanity and fill the pockets of an ambitious class of teachers. Nothing is thoroughly mastered, and the ground has in most cases to be all

gone over again. The result is that the lowest forms of the High Schools do the work of the Public Schools, and the first two years of the University do the work of the High Schools.

On each of these topics much might be said, but this is not the place for it. On one minor one only will I venture to remark—on the small fees, namely. The public perhaps are not aware that by the payment of *two dollars*—that is about two-sevenths of a bricklayer's daily earnings—by the payment of two dollars a candidate may present himself at the nearest town for a Second Class Teachers' Examination. Twenty-eight distinct and separate papers are set.* He is supplied with pens, ink and paper. A presiding examiner is in attendance for forty-two hours and a half. His answer papers are transmitted, with no cost to himself, to Toronto, there to be examined by men chosen for the purpose.—Thus to strew with roses the really thorny path which leads to success in teaching seems to me to be worse than folly. These things the public ought to know, or, if already they know them, they ought to be reminded of them again and again.

Lastly, to refer to a point already mentioned. It is superfluous to say that examinations are, or should be made, in themselves an *educating* process. They are not merely tests of excellence; they are one of the most powerful instruments the teacher possesses for calling forth or exercising the powers of the mind. Unless examinations are made use of with this end in view, one of their most important functions is wasted. And it has been the habit hitherto so to waste the University and Departmental Examinations. A candidate

* Each candidate does not, of course, write on the whole twenty-eight papers; but twenty-eight distinct and separate papers are prepared.