

was 52 per cent. On the standard set by the examiner who valued the answers at 47 per cent the student failed hopelessly. On the standard set by the examiner who gave him 83 per cent he passed with better than first class honours. Mr. Grainger knew the class and the student and on his standard the student failed. On the standard of the average science teacher, and all examination machinery works best by averages, he passed with a very comfortable margin to the good. As much as 75% separated the highest from the lowest standard, the estimate of one teacher from the estimate of his fellow! And this excessive variation, it is to be noted, obtained with science specialists in the subject of physics. What would it be with less exact subjects such as literature or composition and with teachers whose method and subjects were not and could not be so highly organised?

Mr. Grainger states that the Department of Education of Ontario has recognized this variation in standards in connection with its annual examinations and has evolved a unique series of devices to minimise it or compensate for it. This all teachers will admit who have served as associate examiners for the Department of Education. But what about the local examinations of each High School? There are examinations for promotion which in not a few cases are regarded as the only reliable tests of fitness. There are 'qualifying' examinations which in many schools are regarded as the only safe basis upon which to construct the confidential reports of the staff. The variation revealed by Mr. Grainger's summary proves beyond peradventure the fallibility of all these examinations. To be guided solely by them is to be unfair to the students. The unusually 'severe' examiner, the unusually 'destructive' question paper, or their opposites, are expressions of the same unreliability. To accept them at par value is to be unjust to both students and fellow-teachers.

Many teachers have long recognized something of the truth of Mr. Grainger's summary and have long striven to adjust themselves to it. They do not accept written examinations as infallible tests, they discount the abnormal in examiner or question-paper, and they employ as freely as possible the compensating devices of the Department of Education.

But some teachers have not yet recognised the extent of this variation and for them Mr. Grainger's summary has a special significance.

There is a message in Mr. Grainger's article for the Department of Education. Its method of evaluating answer-papers and its devices for offsetting or minimising the variation in marking standards should be made known to every High School teacher. This can be done by calling every High School teacher, as early in his professional career as possible and as frequently and regularly as possible, to service as