

TEACHING AS A PROFESSION.—III.

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INDISCRIMINATE LICENSING.

ASSUMING, as the necessities of the case oblige us to do, that a State cannot at once, or perhaps, for an indefinite period, exact the proficiency we have in view on the part of all teachers in the schools, let the others be certified or licensed upon an intelligent and rational basis. The State should take the whole matter into its own hands if it would secure general results. Establish a minimum standard of intellectual qualifications which all must attain or not teach in the schools. Require all candidates to show at least this standard of scholarship by means of a general system of examinations held at stated times in public places and under competent professional supervision. Let the examiners withhold certificates for other reasons than lack of scholarship whenever they think proper. Retain all papers for reference in case of controversy, and make full public records of all the proceedings. Require that certificates shall always antedate employment, and show upon the face of each just what the holder did in order to earn it. Grade the certificates, and make it to the interest of teachers to advance from the lower to the higher, by making the examinations less frequent and by limiting the number of lower grade certificates which may be issued to the same individual. All this will not take the place of a professional education in an institution maintained for that purpose, but it will set all at work, it will give a proper direction to effort, it will fill up the training classes and the Normal schools, it will make the teaching service more respectable and more respected, and it will stimulate all of the educational work of the

commonwealth in more ways than can easily be enumerated.

But be sure to discriminate, and find a way for leading the public to discriminate, between teachers who have taken a professional course, or have gained a professional position through long study and honorable experience, and the novitiates who are given authority to teach, pursuant to a mere examination, because it was necessary to let them teach in order to supply the schools. This is only just to one class and it is not unjust to the others. The encouragement which it will give to professionals is vital to the growth of a professional spirit and the development of an expert teaching service. This can easily be done by regulating the form and appearance of the certificates by relieving from subsequent examinations, by permanent tenure except for cause, by forbidding the employment of amateurs in the positions which are the most exacting or the schools which are the most important, and by innumerable honors or advantages which may be readily conferred in the practical operations of the schools.

EMPLOY PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS.

Again, the State should not only pursue a policy which will supply well-educated and professionally trained teachers to the schools, so far as possible, but it should also prohibit the employment of any others where such are available.

While thoroughly competent teachers are not paid as well as similar talent is paid in other professions, it is still true that persons without qualifications get more credit and better pay in this work than they could get in any other way. So the supply of candidates is greatly in excess of the