

EDITORIAL.

A PROFESSION.

AN EMPLOYMENT REQUIRING A LEARNED EDUCATION.

WE often hear the phrase, "the teaching profession," though we remember hearing one of the best and most learned teachers in the Province object to the expression. There is no such profession, he stated. We have the legal, the clerical and the medical professions; no one cavils at these societies assuming the designation of profession. Do teachers require a learned education for the proper and efficient discharge of their duties? Every one conversant with the question, and competent to form a judgment, will at once admit the importance of their office and the arduous nature of their work. If all grades of teachers be considered as a unit, from the public school teacher to the college professor, all intelligent people will, without much hesitancy, grant in face of the words at the beginning of this article, the correctness of the time-honoured phrase, "a profession," as properly describing the public servants known to society as teachers. And we add that it is our belief that more college-bred men will be found in the ranks of the teaching profession than in that of either medicine, law or divinity. If teaching, then, be a profession, it is timely and pertinent to ask, Has it the rights and privileges of the other learned professions? Upon the very edge of the inquiry we are met with the special peculiarity that in the case of each of the other three professions each of them has the exclusive right to say what are to be the conditions of admittance, and in some of them sureties are required to vouch for the good standing of the applicant and

his good behaviour in the future, at least as regards his monetary engagements, to his profession. Furthermore, the members exercise unquestioned control as to preparation, attainments and character: often a large entrance fee is exacted as well as an annual payment of dues. How stands the case with the teachers? Have they any say as to admission, preparation, attainments or character? Not a word more than any member of the community. Not only is the case thus, but the Government offers inducements by giving free tuition, paying travelling expenses, giving books, and an allowance for board.

The effect is what any one might easily and clearly have foreseen. Teachers are not held in the same esteem as the other learned professions, and the emoluments are so inadequate that no man of talent or high academic standing, except in a few cases, ever thinks of making teaching his life-work. This result we hold to be the legitimate fruit of the policy pursued towards teachers in the past. If the State should bind itself to provide a fairly comfortable living for the teacher when he has spent his energies in the public service, then there might be some good ground to enter a plea in defence of the past and present plan of preparation for his professional duties; but now that the pension scheme has been withdrawn, and the teacher left to shift for himself, the Government has forfeited all the claim it may once have had to provide for his education, and the matter may now safely be left to the general law of demand and supply. The system now stands as an example of the Executive having departed from a very important com-