

THE

# JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

## THE COUNTY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS.

WE have great pleasure in announcing that the Commissioner of Railways has kindly arranged that competitors, with their parents and friends, teachers, trustees, commissioners, and all others who attend the competition, may receive a free pass home on the railway. The inspectors of Halifax, Colchester, Pictou, and Hants, will be provided with blank certificates of attendance on the competitions. Any who shall have taken part in or witnessed the competition will be entitled to receive a certificate on application to the inspector. Those counties lying along the railway ought not to allow the boys and girls in the county towns to keep all the prizes. We hope they will not. All the country schools in the Province should have an eye to their laurels.

In consequence of the destruction, by fire, of the inspector's office at Baddeck, C. B., there will be no competition in Victoria County. All the prize books were destroyed.

We may state, in answer to several correspondents, that if, in any of the subjects of competition, it should be found that no decision can be reached within the limits previously prescribed, a wider range may then be taken, in the discretion of the inspector.

## EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA.

THE Annual Convention of Teachers was held in Halifax, during the first week of the year. The attendance was unusually large. It was estimated that there were present about 150 Teachers, principally from the Counties of Halifax, Colchester, Pictou, Cumberland, Hants, Kings, and Lunenburg. From the manly tone, intellectual vigor, and cultivation exhibited, we think it may be reasonably inferred that progress in the inner life of our schools is advancing *pari passu* with external improvements. It is no exaggeration to state that never was there so fine an assemblage of Teachers in Nova Scotia, and any thoughtful spectator could not well avoid the conviction, that so many men and women of such a stamp must be exercising a powerful influence for good in moulding the characters and destinies of the rising generation.

The first session was spent principally in reading minutes and hearing reports of committees. In the evening, the Superintendent, by request, addressed the Association, rehearsing the progress in the various departments of educational work. Amongst other matters, such as improvement in school houses, premises, books, registration, and attendance, he showed that the total Provincial aid was largely increased under the present system of uniform grants according to class of license, and that the whole expenditure, by the Government for education, now amounted to over \$160,000. He stated, that in order to secure this greatly improved mode of distribution of Provincial aid, he had pledged himself to arrange a plan for the uniform classification of Teachers; hence the organization of the present system with a central board of examiners in place of the former local boards. He then went on to show some of the advantages resulting to Teachers from this change, and gave an assurance that this examination would be final.

Some discussion ensued, in reference to hardships imposed on those already holding license, by requiring them to submit to re-examination. This discussion was resumed on the following day. A resolution was introduced by Mr. Parsons of Halifax, to the effect that Teachers composing the Association having experienced the inconveniences of district licences, and perceiving the advantage resulting from uniform classification and provincial licences, express their approval of the recent change. Mr. Patterson of Lower Horton, introduced an amendment approving of a central board of Examiners, but condemning the cancelling of licences given by the late local boards. A third resolution was submitted

by Mr. McDonald of New Glasgow, approving of the present system, but deprecating any future cancelling of licences granted under this system.

An animated and exhaustive discussion ensued, extending through forenoon and afternoon sessions. On the one side, it was argued that it was a degradation to compel Teachers already licensed to be re-examined; this was specially unfair in the case of graduates of colleges, and those holding diplomas from the Normal School. It was maintained also that inasmuch as persons of high scholarship may prove very inefficient teachers, skill in the performance of school work was a better test of qualification than written papers. On the other hand, it was shown that with all deference to the value of practical skill, a sound system could not ignore scholarship among the first qualifications of the Teacher; that under the late system, Teachers were frequently subjected to re-examination, when they found it desirable to change their district, and hence it was better to accept this, once for all; and that it was really no degradation. It was notorious, that according to local licenses, some held a position above their merits, whilst, perhaps, others were classed too low. Uniformity was of the highest importance, and for the sake of securing it, graduates of the Normal School should be willing to submit. If they were fully qualified the examination would cost but little effort. With respect to graduates of colleges, it was maintained that they might be quite proficient in classics, philosophy, and other advanced branches, yet quite deficient in common branches. It was urged further that in view of the efforts of the Government and people to elevate the educational condition of the country, it was ungraceful in Teachers even to seem to shrink from an effort to keep pace with the times. A refusal to be re-examined would appear like a tacit confession of inability to meet requirements, and would excite suspicions of this nature. Finally Mr. McDonald withdrew his resolution, and the clause expressing disapproval of subsequent re-examination was added to the motion introduced by Mr. Parsons. This resolution, thus extended, was then carried over Mr. Patterson's amendment by a majority of forty, to ten.

On Thursday the subject of text books came under consideration. Mr. McKay of Cornwallis expressed his conviction that there was a serious defect in the series of Readers. Instead of No. VII. which consists of small fragments from a large number of authors, he felt the want of a book consisting of much more copious selections from a half dozen standard English authors. Much time is often spent in the study of a Greek or Latin author. In the same manner, he would like to see a few authors in our tongue studied critically until their peculiarity of style was thoroughly understood and appreciated, and the pupil was able to recognize these authors by their modes of expression.

An animated discussion was excited by a charge of plagiarism against the Nova Scotia Elementary Arithmetic, preferred by Mr. Major of Halifax. The matter was finally referred to the Superintendent of Education, and the Council of Public Instruction. During part of the morning session, a paper entitled "Hints on Teaching," written by Mr. Mellish of Amherst Academy, was read by the Secretary of the Association. By a unanimous resolution, the managing Committee was instructed, if circumstances should render such a course advisable, to memorialize the Government and Legislature, to make no essential changes in the present school law.

On Thursday evening, Professor McDonald of Dalhousie College read a paper on "The relation of the Common School, to the Higher Education." Professor McLeod, of King's College also read a paper on The Dynamic Theory of Heat.

Resolutions were passed requesting that the three papers mentioned above, should be placed in the hands of the Secretary for publication in the *Journal of Education*.