

our present system on the health of our pupils? If injurious suggest a remedy.

The motion was adopted, and the following committee was appointed to carry out the details:—Messrs. J. F. Kennedy, Alexander, Lewis, Brown, and the mover and seconder.

Mr. F. C. Powell then read a very comprehensive paper on "Principals and Assistants."

The following officers of the Section were elected:—Chairman, Mr. Conates; Secretary, J. A. Brown; Directors, Messrs. Powell, Munro, McQueen, and Barber; Legislative Committee, Messrs. Hendry, Doane, McAllister.

The Section adjourned.

Examination Papers Examined.

A copy of the following circular has been sent to the Head Master of each of the Collegiate Institutes and High Schools in the Province, and to the Head Masters of the Public Schools, in the towns and villages in which the High Schools are situated. It seemed impracticable to send copies to all teachers of every grade in the Province, as we should gladly have done. But as our aim is to elicit the widest possible expression of opinion, we shall be glad to receive replies from any other members of the profession engaged in either the High or Public Schools, who may feel disposed to favor us with their views. As the majority of the writers prefer to withhold their signatures from publication, and as there seems much force in the suggestion made by some, that the case is one in which the criticisms should *stand or fall on their merits*, we have simply numbered the replies in the order in which they happen to come to hand. Following is the circular:

DEAR SIR,—I observe there have been many and strong complaints of the character of some of the question papers set at the late Teachers' and High School Entrance Examinations. Will you have the kindness to give me briefly, for publication in the CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL, over your own name or otherwise as you may prefer, your opinion on the following points? Your communication will be regarded as strictly confidential, if you so desire:

- (1). Were those Examination Papers, as a whole, such as to afford a fair and reasonable test of the fitness of candidates to receive non-professional certificates and to enter the High Schools, respectively?
- (2). If not, which of the papers were specially objectionable, and on what grounds?
- (3). What appears to be the cause of the faults indicated, and what remedy would you propose?

Yours respectfully,

Editor CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL.

REPLIES FROM HEAD MASTERS OF HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGIATE INSTITUTES.

I.

Question (1)—No.

(2). ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.—1. *Orthography and Orthoëpy*.—Single words given for spelling much too difficult. The written examination in Orthoëpy should be abandoned, and the test on this subject made orally in connection with Reading.

2. *Grammar*.—Some of the questions not clear even to examiners. Assume greater maturity of reasoning power than can reasonably be expected of entrance candidates. The paper does not give sufficient prominence to *practical English*.

3. *History*.—Altogether too difficult for this examination.

THIRD CLASS.—1. Grammar paper full of mysterious questions on points which the examiner apparently wishes to force upon teachers. Such radical changes in teaching this subject, if thought worthy of attention, should be effected by *suggestions to teachers*, rather than by such sudden surprises in examination papers.

2. *Literature and Composition*.—Aim at thorough preparation but are too difficult to begin with. Such papers *three years hence*, after gradually leading up to them, might be comparatively unobjectionable.

3. *Drawing*.—Double the time necessary for the work required.

SECOND CLASS.—1. *Grammar, Literature and Composition*, (same remarks as for Third Class).

2. *Algebra*.—Not at all suitable. *Almost without a commendable feature*

(3) 1. A lack of a suitably organized Board of Examiners, working uniformly and consistently according to recognized principles, and prescribed standards. As a result, a dangerous tendency to assert and thrust upon teachers the preferences of individual examiners.

2. Neglect properly to recognize in the Entrance Examination, the opinion of Head Masters of High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, as to the fitness of candidates for admission.

3. Too many written examinations—too much machinery to turn out good work.

REMEDIES PROPOSED.—A.—*For Examinations just concluded*.—1. Let no candidate be plucked on spelling paper (Entrance) if he spolls fairly on other papers. 2. Make due allowance for the inordinate difficulty of the papers in Grammar and History. 3. To this end, suspend the rule requiring at least one-third in every subject, and 50 per cent. of a total.

Third Class.—See 2 and 3 above, as to Grammar, Literature, Composition and Drawing.

Second Class.—See 2 and 3 above, as to Grammar, Literature, Composition and Drawing. No candidate should be plucked because he fails to pass in *Algebra*, on the paper given.

B.—*For the future*.—1. Let the Central Committee include regular representatives from our Public School and High School teachers; also from our Public School Inspectors.

2. All examination papers should be submitted to this committee for approval, before being issued.

3. Put the examiner in Second Class Algebra on Spelling, or some subject not requiring the special exercise of judgment.

II.

(1). I do not consider the examination papers, as a whole, a fair test of the fitness of a candidate for a Second Class Certificate, or for entrance into the High Schools.

(2). I object to the Second Class Algebra, and Second Class Chemistry, each of which I have been teaching for years. The Poetry Literature and the Grammar were difficult, partly on account of the way in which the questions were expressed, and one question on the Grammar I think cannot be fully answered without a knowledge of some inflected language, e.g. Latin or German. The Orthoëpy and History for Entrance, were beyond the capacities of pupils of the age of those who present themselves for examination, and I find that pupils from 12 to 14 years old pass the best examinations.

(3). (a) The causes may be various. One I believe is a desire on the part of the Examiners to raise the standard of entrance to High Schools, and also that of Second Class Certificates. Both of these are already high enough. Third Class teachers should be encouraged to obtain a Second rather than deterred from the attempt.

(b). Select examiners who have no hobby, and who from their own experience and observation, know the capacities of at least 50 per cent. of the candidates who are likely to present themselves for examination.

III.

I think none of the papers were particularly objectionable except the Algebra, Grammar and Literature of Second Class, the Grammar and Literature of the Third Class, and the Grammar, Dictation and perhaps History of the Entrance.

The Algebra was not at all such work as is found in the author prescribed. The Grammar was not so difficult, but was put in such a way that very few understood what was asked. This applies to II., III., and Entrance.

The Literature was, I think, too much in the way of criticisms of the authors, and also the terms used were not comprehended by the candidates. In both Grammar and Literature, the Examiner seemed very desirous of showing how thoroughly he himself understood the matter, rather than of finding out what the candidates knew.

In the Entrance, the list of words selected was too hard. When so many marks were lost in Dictation, Grammar and History, it was impossible for the candidates to make the total required to pass.

IV.

In reply to your communication of the 27th ult, I beg leave to submit the following:—