

THE

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

THE attention of Teachers is specially directed to the advertisement respecting the Annual Convention of Teachers to be held in Halifax during the Christmas Holidays. We hope there will be a large gathering of Teachers—men and women.

EXAMINATIONS.

THAT a system for the examination of teachers, in order to be perfectly satisfactory, must combine the qualities of thoroughness, and uniformity, is a proposition in support of which it is not necessary to advance any argument. It is only on the hypothesis that these two points are attainable that any system of examination becomes desirable. In addition to these qualities, though not of equal importance, rapidity in reaching results is to be sought after. Delay under any circumstances, is unpleasant, perhaps never more so than when we are waiting to hear the result of an examination. The old system in vogue here had this one redeeming quality—it was rapid. But it was rapidly gained at a tremendous sacrifice of what is much more important,—uniformity. That system has been superseded by another, in which thoroughness and uniformity are kept in view as the primary and essential qualities to be sought after, and, so far as consistent with these, every possible effort is made to secure expeditious working. To explain the mode in which this system proposes to attain these qualities is the design of the present article.

For the information of those unacquainted with the details of our school law, we may here explain that, in accordance with an act passed in the last session of the Legislature, the machinery for the examination of teachers in this Province consists of four examiners, and twenty-one deputies. The business of the deputy at each station is to place before the candidates the printed questions sent out from the Education Department, and to forward to the department their written answers. The deputy also examines in reading. The written answers of the candidates are submitted to the examiners, each taking the papers referring to specific subjects. The branches are divided between the examiners thus:—

LANGUAGE.

English Grammar,
" Analysis,
History of English Language,
Prosody,
Composition,
Criticism,
Latin,
Greek.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY.

Geography, General,
" Nova Scotia,
" Ancient,
History, Grecian,
" Roman,
" British,
" Nova-Scotian,
" Universal.

MATHEMATICS.

Arithmetic,
Algebra,
Geometry, Plane,
" Solid and Spherical,
Practical Mathematics,
Navigation.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, TEACHING, & C.

School Management,
Questions on Teaching,
Natural Philosophy,
Book-Keeping,
Chemistry.

After placing his estimate on each set of papers, the examiner returns them to the Education Office, where the several reports referring to each candidate are compared, and the decision made in the manner explained further on.

1. *Thoroughness*:—To ensure thoroughness, two things are indispensable: the questions put to the candidates, must be such as cannot be answered without a fair knowledge of the subject; the candidate must be required to depend solely on his own resources in giving answers to the questions. The questions used at the recent examination were drawn up with very great care and consideration—while it was sought to ask nothing unreasonable, it was also sought to avoid asking any question which could be fully and satisfactorily answered without a respectable knowledge of the branch to which it referred. In a few branches the number of questions asked was perhaps out of proportion to the time allowed for answering them, but the disproportion was more apparent than real, as the questions were such as to admit of very short answers.—often only one word, seldom more than two or three. In assigning the time allowed for some branches, as English Grammar for example, sufficient allowance was not made for the time necessarily consumed in ruling paper in the form required; due consideration was however given to this fact in making the awards. Five per cent. was added to the general average of each candidate, to make up for any injustice which may have been suffered owing to the circumstance under consideration.

In order that all teachers of common schools might be enabled to complete their work in two days, it was necessary to give less time on many branches than was desirable. As the candidates have so generally murmured as to the shortness of the time allowed on each branch, it is probable that hereafter the examination of male candidates for license of the 1st Class will extend over three days. It will then be possible to do more ample justice to all the branches.

In reference to the other requisite to thoroughness it need only be said that the deputy examiner is required to testify that his instructions have been faithfully adhered to and that the papers forwarded have all been wrought by the candidates without improper assistance of any kind.

2. *Uniformity*:—The examination is now perfectly uniform in all parts of the country. The same questions are put to a candidate for a license of a given class wherever he presents himself for examination; the same examiners pronounce on the work of all; and the same rules and tests are applied in all cases. There is therefore nothing left to be desired in this behalf. The law grants the same allowance to teachers of the same class wherever employed. It now by a uniform system of examination, insists that teachers of the same class shall possess like qualifications.

We have said nothing of impartiality. It is of course necessary that the whole process of the examination be as far as possible above the taint of a suspicion of partiality. Unless equal justice is shown to all comers, the system fails of that uniformity which all admit to be a prime requisite. We shall see hereafter that even, apart from the character of the examiners, an almost absolute safeguard is provided against favouritism of any kind.

The mode of conducting the exercises at each station is at once beautifully simple and effective. In order to prevent the dishonestly disposed from copying the exercises of others, the candidates in each grade are made to sit in single alternate rows from front to rear. It is thus made impossible for two of the same grade to sit at the same desk. All are then numbered in the order of grades from front to rear and rear to front alternately in the alternate rows. The following diagram will illustrate our meaning. A stands for candidates for Head-Master's diploma; B for candidates for license of the 1st Class; C for female candidates of the 1st and