

"punctuation, the substance of any passages which may be read, or any topics which may be suggested."

The members of the Perth Board found but few candidates who could express their ideas in writing. Many candidates complained that they were called upon to write on subjects which they never had studied, nor on which they had bestowed a thought. To encourage candidates to practice the writing of compositions, and to obviate the complaints mentioned above, it occurred to the Board that it would be better to give to candidates a list of subjects to study—and on the day of examination to choose by ballot one of the subjects of this list for composition. It was expected that many if not all of the candidates would study these subjects, and would be prepared to write on any one that will be chosen at the examination. I am credibly informed that many intending candidates are studying the subjects for composition, and are writing essays, so as to be prepared to write at the next examination. The hope of gaining a prize will no doubt stimulate many to study earnestly. The reputation of having gained a prize will secure for the fortunate candidates the best situations as teachers.

HIGHLY COMMENDABLE ACTION OF THE LANARK COUNTY COUNCIL.

When we consider the importance of having good teachers, and when we consider how useful it is, and what an accomplishment it is for a person to express grammatically his or her ideas in writing we cannot but highly appreciate the action of the boards of the county of Lanark, their efforts speak well for their zeal for the advancement of education. And the readiness of the County Council of Lanark in granting money for prizes is certainly deserving of all praise, and well worthy of imitation.

The council gave the grant as an experiment. It is to be hoped that the experiment will realize the expectations formed, and will justify the present grant so that the council may be induced to continue to make similar grants in future. I believe this is the first instance of a grant being made by a county council to give prizes to teachers and I think it worthy of honorable mention in the *Journal of Education*. The action of the council has met with the approval of all the friends of education. When it became known that prizes were to be given to teachers, for composition and general proficiency, all with whom I had conversation on this topic said it was a move and a step in the right direction.

CONDITIONS ON WHICH THE PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN TO TEACHERS.

Prizes for general proficiency will be given according to the following standard:—

To obtain first class A prize, a candidate must have at least above the total minimum of marks according to the accompanying schedule—one-half of the difference of the total of the maximum and the minimum.

First class B must have above the total of minimum, at least one-quarter of the difference between the maximum and minimum.

First class C must have at least the minimum.

Prizes will be given in the second class to the three highest above total of minimums.

The following standards for composition and reading have been adopted for the use of examiners.

STANDARD FOR COMPOSITION.

Knowledge of subject	40 marks.
Grammatical construction and arrangement of sentences. 35	
Punctuation and neatness	25

100

For every word misspelt five marks are to be deducted. The maximum, 100; minimum, 70.

STANDARD FOR READING.

Pronunciation	25 marks.
Accentuation	25
Punctuation	25
Modulation of voice.....	25

Total.....100 maximum.

Minimum, 70. One mark to be charged for each fault.

The total maximum of marks attainable according to the schedule is 1,990. The total of minimum necessary to obtain first class, 1,345. To obtain prizes according to the above standard, candidates must have at least the following number of marks:—

For Males.—Maximum, 1990; minimum, 1345; difference, 645.

To obtain 1st class A prize, $\frac{1}{2}$ diff. $322\frac{1}{2} + \text{min. } 1,345 = 1667$.

To obtain 1st class B prize, $\frac{1}{4}$ diff. $161 + \text{min. } 1,345 = 1506$.

To obtain 1st class C prize, " min. 1345.

For Females.—Maximum, 1699; minimum, 1135; difference, 555.

1st class A, $\frac{1}{2}$ diff. $277\frac{1}{2} + \text{min. } 1135 = 1412$.

1st class B, $\frac{1}{4}$ diff. $188 + \text{min. } 1135 = 1323$.

1st class C, " min. " 1135.

As female candidates are not examined in algebra, euclid and mensuration the maximum and minimum for males and females differ as above.

First class certificates are given according to the above standard.

1st class A, until annulled.

1st class B, for 3 years.

1st class C, for 1 year.

According to present regulations second class certificates are given to all who have marks above the total of minimum, for one year.

N. B.—A special prize for composition will be given to the most successful among Normal School teachers, and others. See printed notice.

PRECAUTIONS IN THE MODE OF EXAMINATION.

The examinations are held in the town hall. Each candidate has a small desk for himself or herself. The desks are six feet apart, and were made expressly by direction of the Board for the examinations. There is no whispering, nor any opportunity for copying. The examinations last three days. All the candidates, whether for first or second class certificates, are first examined in third class subjects; if found competent, and they desire it, they are examined in second class subjects, and then in first class subjects. The Board was induced to compel all candidates to be examined in third class subjects, because many applied for first class certificates who were barely able to obtain a third class certificate.

EXPLANATION OF THE SYSTEM OF MARKS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD.

A brief description of the system of marks in use by the Board of Perth, and lately adopted by all the boards of the county of Lanark, may prove interesting.

The standing of candidates is determined by this system, which consists in giving a certain number of marks or points for each subject. A maximum number of marks is fixed for each subject which is given to the candidates who answer well all the questions on the subject of examination, and a minimum number is fixed indicating the answers to be good. A person who does not make the minimum number of marks is considered deficient in the subject examined. The examiner, for instance in giving, say ten questions in arithmetic, will give a hundred marks to the candidate, who shall have answered all the questions correctly. The examiner may at his discretion give more marks to one question than to another, according as one is more difficult than another, but the total number must not exceed the standard fixed by the board. The accompanying schedule contains the list of subjects of examination as prescribed by the programme for examination of teachers, and also the maximum and minimum number of marks allotted to each subject by the board. It also contains, by way of illustration, the marks made by some candidates at the last examination in Perth.

It may be asked why a low maximum is given to history, physiology, etc. I reply: the knowledge of these subjects chiefly depends on a mere effort of memory, and they are more easily learned than arithmetic, grammar, reading, etc. If a high maximum were given for the subjects I have named some with good memories might get higher certificates than their other attainments as teachers would warrant. To excel in grammar, arithmetic, reading, etc., is considered so highly important for teachers that, therefore, a high maximum is given for proficiency in them.

The great benefit in the system of marks is this, it determines with greater accuracy and precision the standing of candidates than by any other system. Before the adoption of the system in Oct., 1868, examiners decided on the merits of candidates pretty much in this fashion. A., was very good in grammar, middling in arithmetic, pretty fair in reading, tolerable in geography, &c., &c. These expressions were rather vague and indefinite. They had no sharp lines of demarcation, they were susceptible of contraction and expansion, and like a piece of India rubber they could be stretched out or contracted according to circumstances. Since the system has been adopted by the Board of Perth, the line of demarcation between each class is sharply defined. If a candidate has but one mark below minimum of first class he is put into the second. When it came first into operation, several who had first and second class certificates under the former system were, much to their surprise and disappointment, put into the second and third class.

During the examination the secretary of the board keeps the schedule before him, and each examiner reports to him the number of marks each candidate makes in the subjects examined. The schedule is filed in a book and kept for future reference.

I do not pretend to say that this system is better than all others now in use by the boards of Ontario. To maintain the affirmative