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Editorial.

Third-Class Certificates and Examinations.

The School Law of Ontario, adopted in 1871, inaugurated an era of improvement in our public system of elementary and secondary education. "By this Act, all the Public Schools were made free; trustees were compelled to provide adequate school accommodation; the principle of compulsory education was introduced; well qualified County Inspectors were substituted for township superintendents, and their remuneration provided for; new County Boards of Examiners were constituted; first and second-class certificates thereafter granted were made valid during good behavior," and many other minor improvements were effected. Many wise and necessary regulations were made by the Council of Public Instruction as required to accord with the measures of the new law, but the part of the Regulations relating to third-class certificates has proved a failure.

It was the fond hope of Dr. Ryerson, the late Chief Superintendent, and his colleagues in the Council, that the present system of standards, grading, time and territory limitations of certificates would, in a large measure, raise the standing and increase the efficiency of the teaching profession. The operation of the law of 1871 has been productive of these results, but it has been in spite of third-class certificate regulations. Instead of keeping teachers in the work, encouraging them to persevere in self-improvement, and leading them to aspire to higher grades of certificates, the proofs of greater worth and efficiency, these easily obtained third-class certificates seem to bewitch many of their holders with a sort of self satisfaction. For three years they move along a slightly declined plane, until they are ruthlessly bumped up against the, to them, expansive stone wall of a second-class certificate, or, perhaps, warned by the discomfiture of compeers, switch off just in time to save a defeat, for an avocation unbarred by certificates,—and thus their time has been in large part lost to themselves, and their experience to the profession.

The regulations referred to were adopted in 1871. Since that time, under them, there have been granted in Ontario, 9,267 third-class certificates. Now there are 5,229 unexpired third-class certificates, which, with the number of County Board and

interim certificates engaged at the time of the last official report, would make 263 more than the entire number of Public School teachers engaged in the Province. The year that the School Law of 1871 was passed, 16 per cent. of the teachers engaged were Provincial certificate holders, although there had been only one institution, the Toronto Normal School, where such certificates could be obtained. According to the last official report, 22 per cent of the teachers engaged are of the first and second-class, notwithstanding that the Normal School has been turning out the usual number, and that Boards in every County have been adding their annual quota of such teachers. There were 182 more Provincial certificates at the beginning of 1874 than at the same time of 1873, yet there was a decrease of 12 teachers in actual service holding Provincial certificates, while there was an increase of 298 engaged third-class teachers. Hence it is seen that not only a large number of our teachers attain no higher than a third-class position, but also that a large proportion of the experienced and educated teachers annually forsake their profession. The cause is not far to seek. We have shown that there are enough valid third-class certificates to enable their possessors to fill nearly all our schools, perhaps including 'permits' and renewed 'thirds' more than enough. In the competition for situations, the difference in salary often decides in favor of the youthful and inexperienced third-class teacher. We know of a case where a seventeen-year old pupil and her teacher, a married man, trained at the Normal School, were applicants for a certain school,—difference in salary, \$150; the trustees said, "There won't be any big ones coming now, she is good enough scholar to teach any of the rest." The sequel is unnecessary.

There is too great a difference between second and third-class requirements. The third-class standard is too low, or the second too high, or both. We are strongly of opinion that it is possible to obtain a third-class certificate with a very small amount of "stock-in-trade", and a deceivably large opinion of it. An excellent teacher who had commenced studying for a first-class certificate after having obtained a good second A, remarked in all earnestness,— "When I obtained my third-class certificate I thought it would be a small book would hold all I didn't know; now I am commencing to find out