

### Appointment of Teachers.

Recently in the City of St. John there came up a question as to the appointment of a subordinate in the fire department. An opinion had been given that such appointments were vested in the Council. There were two candidates—one recommended by the chief of the fire department and the other backed by certain aldermen. The chief engineer rightly claimed that the interests of the public required the services of a competent man and had the courage to offer his resignation if his recommendation were not carried out. Those men interested in insurance and fire protection in the city, and composing some of the most prominent business men, immediately interposed and most emphatically endorsed the position of the chief.

Let us draw a parallel between the schools and the fire department. Both have chiefs; that of the schools drawing \$2000 a year and that of the fire \$1000 a year. The relative importance of these departments may be gauged from the salaries paid to their heads, both of whom, it is presumed, owe their positions to special fitness for their duties. Both have working under them numerous subordinates. If it be in the interest of the public service, and no one questions it, that the subordinates of the fire department be approved of by the chief, how much more important must it be that the teachers in the service of the city be approved of by the superintendent of schools.

That this policy is not pursued is well known to every one, more particularly to applicants for positions on the teaching staff, who seldom or ever secure them except by a course of wire-pulling and button-holing trustees, who, though they may be good business men, know little of the requirements of the school-room and the fitness of candidates to teach.

Some city boards disregard merit and under the specious pretext of appointing only the connections of ratepayers cloak other and more selfish motives. This policy no doubt pleases a few ratepayers, but what about the great body of citizens who are sufferers by the incompetency brought about by such a policy? A few meetings of citizens interested in schools similar to that held by those interested in the fire department would cause a great awakening and be of vast benefit to the educational interests of the cities.

The most progressive cities in the United States vest the appointment of teachers entirely in the hands of experts, and such will be the course followed in Canada when those most interested arouse themselves to the importance of this most vital matter.

Kindly send the REVIEW to my address again. I cannot do without it. A FORMER SUBSCRIBER.

### Night Schools.

The school trustees of the City of St. John have very wisely determined to open night schools, and the numerous applications for admission would indicate that their policy meets with approval. Night schools are not by any means an experiment in New Brunswick, but many previous well-meant efforts in this direction, it must be confessed, have resulted in doubtful benefit. There have been various reasons for this. The patrons of night schools are actuated by various motives. The great majority, let us hope, attend with the laudable purpose of improving themselves. There are others who are actuated by the spirit of mischief and insubordination, and still others who seem to have no other motive than to spend their evenings in a novel way and perhaps more comfortably than they have been accustomed.

Many mistakes, too, have been made by the governing bodies. The idea seems to prevail that young men of very diverse attainments can be herded together in classes of fifty or sixty in one room, and the same principles of classification can be followed as in the day schools. This is a great mistake. The machine has no place here, but individual attention is the need of the pupil. Some require instruction in one branch and others in another, and it is wise to allow options in this regard. Another mistake that has been made is the employment of teachers who are considered not quite eligible for the day schools. If they lack the power to maintain discipline, or to secure attention and interest, they are certainly ineligible for the more difficult night schools. No measures have been taken to check insubordination at the outset, with the result that those who have been really desirous for knowledge, have become disgusted and left, and the mischief makers have given tone to the schools.

These are some of the reasons which have caused the efforts of those in favor of night schools to be spasmodic. In as far as is known to the REVIEW, no town in the province has maintained them regularly. No night school should have more than twenty-five students in one room. Men should not be seated at boys' desks. The strictest supervision should be maintained, and the lawless element promptly ejected. Students should be allowed to elect their own studies. Day school teachers should not be employed, as they have quite enough to do in their own departments, and double work will result in partial failure in all they attempt.

"Learn to make a right use of your eyes; the commonest things are worth looking at—even stones and weeds and the most familiar animals. The difficult art of thinking, of comparing, of discriminating, can be more readily acquired by examining natural objects for ourselves than in any other way."—*Hugh Miller*.