

The Canada School Journal.

VOL. VII.

TORONTO, JUNE 1882.

No. 61.

The Canada School Journal

IS PUBLISHED THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH AT

11 WELLINGTON ST. WEST, TORONTO, ONT., CAN.

Subscription \$1.00 per year, payable in advance.

Address—W. J. GAGE & CO., Toronto.

CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS RECEIVED

*An Honorable Mention at Paris Exhibition, 1878.
Recommended by the Minister of Education for Ontario.
Recommended by the Council of Public Instruction, Quebec.
Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, New Brunswick.
Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Nova Scotia.
Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, British Columbia.
Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Manitoba.*

The Publishers frequently receive letters from their friends complaining of the non-receipt of the JOURNAL. In explanation they would state, as subscriptions are necessarily payable in advance, the mailing clerks have instructions to discontinue the paper when a subscription expires. The clerks are, of course unable to make any distinction in a list containing names from all parts of the United States and Canada.

THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL MASTERS.

The Education Department of this Province insists, and rightly so, on as thorough a professional training as the circumstances will admit of in the case of public school teachers. Each candidate is required to spend a certain time in a county model school before he is licensed to teach at all, and then he is required to show that he has taught successfully for a still longer time before he can rise from a lower to a higher grade. The average time occupied by public school teachers in obtaining first-class certificates is probably not less than ten years, and when they have reached this rank they are still far from being in as good a position on the average as head masters of high schools. This is true of even the fortunate few amongst public school teachers who are head masters of central schools in towns and cities, and who succeed in becoming inspectors of school districts.

The intending high school master, on the other hand, who is a graduate of a university, is allowed to commence work as an assistant without any professional training, however youthful or inexperienced he may be, and after a very brief experience as an assistant he is allowed to take charge of a school. Matters are in this respect not so unfairly arranged as they once were, but something more should be required than is at present required, by way of professional qualification, from those proposing to take charge of high schools. Mere scholastic attainments are not enough—are not even the most important matter to be considered in the selection of a schoolmaster of any grade in the profession.

It is often easier to discern a defect than to point out the best remedy, but one way of minimizing it would be the establishment of a chair of education in connection with University College. A movement is now on foot to reorganize to some extent the staff of that institution, and we would like to see

both the authorities of the College and the Minister of Education make an effort to secure the creation of such a department of academical work. But even if nothing of the kind is undertaken it would still be open to the Education Department to exact a longer probation from graduates before they are allowed to become head masters. In many instances the position of head master of a high school means the placing of all the public school masters in the same place in a relation of subordination, and to able and experienced teachers this is a positive injustice when the high school master is an inexperienced youth however thoroughly he may be acquainted with literature, science, or philosophy. A change in the direction indicated would be beneficial alike to the schools and the profession, while it would tend to keep out of the latter many who now enter it for the purpose of making it a stepping-stone to something more congenial or more profitable.

TOWNSHIP INSTITUTES.

At the last meeting of the Wentworth Teachers' Association, Mr. J. H. Smith, the inspector for the county, obtained the sanction of the convention for the adoption of a plan which, if properly worked out, should be productive of great benefit to the teachers in rural schools. His proposal is to ask all the teachers of a township to spend one day together in one of the schools of that township in company with himself, and engage by turns in the actual work of conducting classes in various subjects. None of the time will be taken up in the kind of work usually done at district conventions, such as the discussion of methods. The work is to be entirely practical and the best methods, when thus illustrated, will become models for those teachers whose experience has not been varied or whose opportunities for acquiring professional training have been limited.

Mr. Smith proposes to go through all the townships of his district in succession and to do this at least once a year. His plan is not a new one, but it has not been very often attempted in so systematic a manner as he contemplates, and the result of his experiment will be watched with some interest. It will be strange indeed if some of the teachers do not benefit by it. Those who have had only a model school professional training will have opportunities of making observations from a more advanced point of view than the one they occupied before commencing to teach. What little experience they have had will enable them to gain more useful lessons in teaching in one day than they formerly learned in a month, and even skilled teachers will profit by observing each others' methods. No class of workmen are more in danger of running in grooves than teachers, and the township institute, conducted as Mr. Smith proposes to conduct his, would be the most effective means of preventing this.