

The Educational Weekly.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 15, 1885.

THE Waterloo teachers, at their last meeting, proposed a resolution that in their opinion "all candidates presenting themselves at the professional Third Class Teachers' Examinations should be required to pay a fee of twenty-five dollars—the money to be disposed of by the Education Department in the interests of education." The objects aimed at are (1) the prevention of frequent changes of teachers by lessening the supply of third class teachers, and consequently (2) the betterment of the status, financial and otherwise, of second and first-class teachers, and, it may be said, of the profession generally. While agreeing with the association in recognizing the urgent need of amendment in these matters, we do not believe that the remedy proposed is a good one. What is wanted is not a less supply, but a better supply. And if the supply were better in culture and character, it would be considerably less in number. The granting of third-class certificates should be left largely to the county boards; no one standard of qualification, either professional or non-professional, can suit the different needs of different counties. The west has too many third-class candidates; the east and the north too few. The Education Department should not grant non-professional third-class certificates, but simply certificates of scholastic standing—all those below a certain fixed minimum being rejected. The county boards of examiners, knowing precisely the educational conditions of their respective counties, could determine what literary and scientific attainments they should require of all candidates for professional certificates coming before them.

THE aim of the Education Department, as we understand it, is to maintain a fair standard of non-professional standing for the Province as a whole. To meet the deficiency of supply which exists in the northern districts and eastern counties, power is given to the boards in these districts and counties to grant "district certificates," valid only in the districts in which they are given. The *modus operandi* in granting these certificates is precisely that described above. All candidates desiring certificates are examined on the same papers and in the same way as candidates for provincial certificates. The Education Department then sends to the different boards the marks obtained by the candidates within the jurisdiction of the boards. The boards then determine, each board for itself, what standard they will require, paying due regard to the educational needs of their districts. If this plan works

reasonably well we see no reason why it should not be extended so as to include within its operation all the third-class certificates of the Province.

IT will be remembered that early this year the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY strongly advocated the institution of an annual ARBOR DAY for Ontario schools. At the same time we published a series of articles showing what good work had been wrought in various States of the American Union in the matter of arboriculture through the instrumentality of school children. The immediate success of our advocacy of the general observance of Arbor Days was much greater than we had ventured to hope for. It received the hearty support of the provincial press; and the Minister of Education at once issued a circular setting apart the 6th of May as the first school Arbor Day of Ontario. That day was observed in very many schools with such a practical expenditure of enthusiastic energy that the most beneficial results must follow. The plentiful and general growth of trees is a necessity to the material weal of the Province; a necessity, also, to the salubrity of its climate, and indispensable to the beauty of its landscape. But our soil has been largely denuded of its once magnificent arboreal investment, and that this waste may be redeemed, our children must be indoctrinated with a fondness for trees and forests which, judging from the indifference to nature's bounties that we, their parents, exhibit, they are not likely to obtain by inheritance. In the, now, continental movement for making arboriculture an (indirect or incidental) school study, this argument is always set forth—that our children must be taught to revere, and protect and cultivate what we have disregarded and neglected and destroyed—our indigenous trees and shrubs. The folly of the wholesale destruction of forests, for the sake of a small present gain, is now being generally recognized. A great part of Ohio was once covered by walnut trees whose value, if standing now, would be many times more than that of the land they covered, with all its subsequent improvements. Surely some of this timber was needlessly destroyed. In Muskoka, it is said, that of birch, one of the most valuable of our woods for furniture and indoor work, thousands of acres have been burnt on land not worth five, or at most, ten dollars an acre, when cleared. Some of this may have been unavoidable; but it ought not to be forgotten that land on which lines and clumps of trees are growing, and on which some proportion of forest wood still stands, is more productive than it would be if its soil had not to support even a single tree.

WE are led to make the above remarks by observing that Pennsylvania, which celebrated its first Arbor Day on April 16th last, is so well pleased with the results of its beginning that it has appointed October 29th as a supplementary school Arbor Day, to be observed in those districts of the State for which the first day appointed was too early in the year. It may be possible that some Ontario schools failed to observe the 6th of May for a similar reason. If so, we hope they will set apart some day very soon, for doing what was neglected in the spring. The autumn season is quite favorable to tree-planting, although the autumn weather is not so well suited to the many pretty ceremonies with which Arbor Day can be made delightful as the sunny weather of genial spring. But so much *needs* to be done, no time should be lost. If teachers wish to leave a notable impress upon the schools in which they are now working, we know of no way more suitable than doing something to improve the generally bleak and unattractive appearance of school buildings and school yards. During the summer vacation we had opportunity to see many schools. We were struck, more forcibly than ever, with their unpleasant, uninviting aspect: an unpainted "stoop," a dejected woodshed, a pump stuck in a heap of clay with a hideous garniture of Canada thistles about it, a gateless fence, and perhaps a straggling woodpile, were the all too common features. How easily these things might be bettered. The yard could be cleaned up. The detritus of a score of years' wear-and-tear in the playground could be carted off. Virginia creepers and wild honeysuckles could be set to grow around the stoop and shed. A clump of young elms could be put in each corner of the yard. Some maples, lindens or chestnuts could be planted in front of the school grounds or upon the opposite side of the road. To the care of each class certain trees should be assigned. The girls should be asked to contribute something towards the interior decoration of the house. The trustees, under the influence of the general interest in the improvement of school-premises, would not be slow to make a proper drain for the waste water of the pump, to replace the clay with a more presentable substitute, to put paint here and paint there where needed, to prop up the tumbling shed, to straighten the frost-bent fences, and to take their full share in everything that ought to be done. Nothing succeeds so much as enthusiastic co-operation; but in this matter, as in all others for the advancement of his school, the teacher must be the moving spirit.