

THE

# JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

## EXAMINATIONS.

### II.

LAST month we stated that in the examination of Teachers thoroughness and uniformity are of primary importance, and shewed, with some minuteness, the manner in which examinations are now conducted. We return to the subject for the purpose of suggesting in brief a few of the numerous benefits likely to result from the new system.

It would be vexatious, not to say impracticable, for trustees to test the qualifications of applicants for the school under their charge. Hence the necessity for some system of examination and classification. But the license or diploma, if worthy of confidence should be a faithful expression of the holder's capabilities. The extensive interchange of Teachers amongst the different counties, renders it exceedingly desirable that any particular class of license should be an expression of the same qualifications throughout the Province. Further, in the matter of Endowment or Government grant, our law deals equally with all Teachers of the same class. Common justice therefore demands that, as nearly as possible, there should be equality of attainment on the part of those holding the same grade of license.

The superiority of the new system of examination over that which it supersedes, arises from the fact that it will give a more reliable certificate and will secure uniformity throughout the Province. We believe the advantages will soon be felt by all parties concerned.

Under the system of local Boards it often happened that suitable examiners could not be readily obtained, and where it was otherwise, private business would not admit of that attention, which so important a public service demanded. Further, with the highest integrity and the most conscientious desire to be faithful, local and personal feelings must often bias the judgment, and, under the most favourable circumstances, it could not be expected that thirty-five Boards of Examiners—as in the late system—would make the same grade of license express equality of attainment. Nevertheless we fully believe that these local Boards served a purpose, in their day, which a more perfect system would now have effected. The past three years have been a transition period in our educational history. The Local Examiners wisely adapted themselves to that state, by a moderate application of the syllabus, and by an application suited to the peculiar exigency of their respective districts, in a way that a general Board could not have done. With its higher attainments and more consolidated system, the country now demands a higher standard of qualifications as the fitting counterpart to liberal salaries.

In order to secure the highest efficiency in the work of examination and that the results shall command the highest confidence, the four Provincial Examiners have been selected from the Professors of four of our Colleges. Thus, at the same time we have secured a bond of sympathy between our common schools and higher institutions of learning.

The introduction of the new regime involves an apparent hardship and may seem vexatious to Teachers who have been already licensed by local Boards. We believe, however, that a little reflection will convince the professional Teacher—by which we mean the one who has adopted the business as a calling, in distinction from him who uses it as a stepping-stone—that a Central Board of Examiners is an indispensable means in raising his calling to the dignity of a profession, and that the slight inconvenience of re-examination, will be more than compensated by the advantages resulting. His field is now extended from a single district—perhaps a half of a county—to the whole Province. The Teacher whose license limited him within so narrow a range in which to secure a place suitable in all respects for him, and for which he was suited, must often suffer pecuniary loss or submit to re-examination.

But this is not all, nor the worst. Thus circumscribed and with credentials open to that suspicion which possible local influences would inevitably suggest, he could make no pretensions to the rank of a profession. Under the present system he will feel himself ennobled from the fact that he holds his position by the judgment and decision of the highest authorities in his own calling. Others will accord to him that honour. His license not only has a wider limit; it commands more confidence and consequently more respect.

What has been said respecting the past as a transition period, will show the necessity for re-examination. But we feel convinced that even if this were not made imperative, it would not be long before all our worthy Teachers would avail themselves of the higher honours of the new license. A strong wind by blowing out the chaff and throwing the lighter grain to the tail of the heap, shows the full kernels to the best advantage; so a more stringent examination, by sifting out the incompetent, will add to the value of the license, and increase the dignity of the competent. We hope, then, that none will complain that the lines are drawn too close. As this examination will be final, except in cases of palpable incompetency, it is necessary that there be a careful and impartial application of the syllabus.

It will be seen from the article in the October number, that graduates of the Normal School are tested, as to literary qualifications, by the same questions, and in the same manner, as other applicants for license, but that, in adaptation to the peculiar character of that institution as a professional training school, each graduate has appended to his diploma an expression of his teaching ability, according to the judgment of the Faculty. There is nothing invidious in this distinction. It simply shows that the holder is a graduate of that institution, and holds a certain position as a practical teacher, in the estimation of the Faculty—it gives him credit for whatever the honours of the institution are worth in the opinion of the country—nothing more. We may add that it imposes a great responsibility on the professors, if they would have their honours held at a premium.

THE competition for the copies of Murdoch's History of Nova Scotia offered as prizes in connection with the Public Schools of the several counties, will take place in the respective County Towns, on

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, commencing at 10 o'clock, A.M.

1. None will be allowed to compete but *bona fide* pupils of the public schools who shall have attended the schools of their respective sections at least three quarters of the time they have been in session during the term, up to the date of the competition. Each competitor must present a certificate to this effect, signed by the Teacher.

2. The prizes will be awarded to the successful competitors in the following branches:—

ENGLISH HISTORY, from Accession of Queen Elizabeth, . . . 1 set.  
 MENTAL ARITHMETIC, . . . . . 1 "  
 READING AND RECITATION, . . . . . 1 "  
 SPELLING, . . . . . Remaining sets, (one to each successful pupil.)

3. The Inspector for the County will preside at each Examination, and shall name three or more qualified persons to act with himself as judges in all cases of doubt. He may also call in such other aid in conducting the examination, as he may deem expedient.

4. In English History and Spelling, the first stage of the examination shall be conducted as class exercises in those branches. Each competitor making two mistakes or failures within the first hour, or one subsequently, to retire from the competition. This to be continued till the number left is twice the number of prizes in the branch. These shall be subsequently examined individually, in turn, on the same questions—all except the one being examined to be absent from the room.