

city, town, or incorporated village, where a high school is situated." Now the obvious meaning and intention of this is, that the high schools shall, where possible, take up the fifth class work of the public schools, allowing the public schools to attain to a standard which is below that in force in 1876. This regulation may have been intended to serve a good purpose, but its operation cannot but impair the usefulness both of public and high schools, since it decrees practically that a public school may be relieved of a part of its regular programme by a high school. The average school trustee will be only too glad to avail himself of this "recommendation," as it will relieve the financial pressure, and enable him to show a balance at the end of the year, a thing which delights the country ratepayer, and secures the re-election of the careful trustee.

If we turn to the question of High Schools and Collegiate Institutes we shall see that there is practically little difference between them. A High School is to have at least two, and may have three teachers; a Collegiate Institute must have four. Under the old regulations Collegiate Institutes were required to have at least an average attendance of 60 male pupils taking classics. Under the present law this qualification is done away with altogether, and a minimum is not required. The importance of this Collegiate qualification may not appear at first sight. But if we consider what a Collegiate Institute should be, we will see that the qualification was a most necessary one. The presence of at least 60 male pupils insured a large number of pupils available for all classes. As girls very rarely take classics, the restriction to male pupils will be seen to have an additional force and significance. But now, since the minimum of 60 male pupils has been swept away, a Collegiate Institute may now exist and yet be on a basis not at all superior to an ordinary high school: and the number of pupils not being kept up, classes for University work cannot be formed; and consequently preparatory university work cannot be taken up in the Collegiate Institutes, and the work must ultimately fall upon the staff of University College.

The letter from Mr. John Seath, which we print in another column, will be found, we think, to bear testimony in our behalf. Mr. Seath's position as a High School Inspector, and his long and varied experience, well qualify him to speak upon this subject. We value his opinion, founded as it is upon personal observation, and we regret that we cannot agree with him. We do not wish to set our own limited experience and observation in opposition to that of one so qualified to speak, but at the same time we are inclined to think that the mere "unpopularity" of first year work with staffs of High Schools, should not allow the High Schools to escape or shirk what is their plain and manifest duty. Mr. Seath explains that the two master High Schools are very heavily burdened as it is, and that they are doing as much as they can when they prepare candidates for the departmental examinations of the 2nd and 3rd class. If we cannot reasonably expect High Schools, with small staffs, to do University matriculation work, we think that such work might with propriety be expected from the Collegiate Institutes. But what do we find the case to be? Mr. Seath says: "My experience is that first year work is not popular with staffs or School Boards, and as a matter of fact, only one or two of the Institutes now undertake the honor courses of this examination." This is a very startling confession, and one which should move the authorities to investigate the question, and see that such a state of affairs is altered. If the Collegiate Institutes exist for anything, it is to take up just such work as Mr. Seath confesses only one or two now undertake. If the High Schools did their proper share of the work, the Collegiate Institutes would be found able to prepare honour candidates for matriculation, and in fact do what is now imposed upon University College.

Mr. Seath admits that Collegiate Institutes and High Schools are, as at present constituted, identical in character and in the scope of their work. This fact alone proves that the Secondary Schools are not fulfilling their full duty, and the fact that this is due largely to the "unpopularity" of increased school grants, and the "unpopularity" of increased school work, does not, to our way of thinking, constitute a sufficient reason for saddling University College with work that properly belongs to the Secondary Schools, and for which they were originally founded. The conclusion of the whole matter is: Not that our High Schools and Collegiate Institutes do indifferent work; but that they are not developed enough; not that our educational system is too elaborate or too extensive in character; but that it is capable of accomplishing much more than it does, and that, without any increase of resources or machinery. We have endeavoured to present the question, impartially, from the point of view of the University; we shall be most happy to hear the other side of the question—from the point of view of Secondary Schools. With this object in view, we shall gladly open our columns to those masters of High Schools and Collegiate Institutes who may feel an interest in the discussion. Our only object is to arrive at some conclusion as to the best method of bettering the present state of things, and of improving both the Secondary Schools and the University.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The Editors are not responsible for the opinions of correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned contributions.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—In reply to your request for my opinion as to the propriety of discontinuing the first year work of the University and requiring it from the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, I would submit that, as matters stand, it would be unwise to take this course. I base my opinion on the following:—

(1) The burden of work upon the High Schools is now very great, especially during the first half of the year. The two masters' schools do as much as can be expected from them when they prepare candidates for the second and third class departmental examinations, and for the present pass junior matriculation examination. Some of the better schools of this class, it is true, take up one or more of the honour courses; but in many cases most of this additional work is done after school hours. Since the partial assimilation of the pass work of the first year with the honour work of junior matriculation, a good many schools with more than two masters take up both courses; but my experience is that first year work is not popular with staffs or school boards, and, as a matter of fact, only one or two of the Institutes now undertake the honour courses of this examination.

(2) If your suggestion were acted upon and the present high school entrance standard maintained, an additional master would be required in nearly all the schools; otherwise the smaller ones could not continue "to prepare students for university matriculation," as the High Schools Act requires. As the local tax for high school purposes is in most cases large—and, I may add, likely to become larger even under existing circumstances—I am quite sure that a scheme of the nature you propose would be unpopular in most high school districts.

(3) You may say, however, that it would be proper to utilize the collegiate institutes for this higher work, because these schools were originally intended as special feeders of the university. No doubt they were originally designed to serve this purpose; but, for reasons which it is unnecessary to state, the basis on which they were constituted has been changed, and they are now simply a better equipped and better manned class of high schools. Many of them, indeed, do more advanced work than the high schools, but this is a result of their character, not the legal justification of their existence. A change which would make it necessary for a candidate to leave his local high school to secure such teaching as would enable him to matriculate would probably suit some of the larger and richer schools, but it would be unfair to many of the supporters of the smaller high schools. The object of our high school system is to multiply the local centres of secondary education. The scheme you propose would be practically a reversal of this policy.

Let me add, however, that in my opinion the time has come when a higher standard of attainments—a higher percentage for pass—may be fairly expected at junior matriculation. I am quite sure that the adoption of this course would provide at least a partial remedy for the evils you complain of, and at the same time benefit the matriculant and increase the efficiency of the high schools.

J. SEATH.

THE LIQUOR INTEREST AGAIN THREATENED.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—The thronged meeting of the Literary Society last Friday night, the rushing about of the whips, the bellowings of each Boanerges of debate, and the vast amount of general excitement, recalled the scenes of three or four years ago. Though the Society has had a remarkably successful year, such nights come but seldom now. Party spirit seems to be unsettled; the ground has been so torn up during the late scimmages, and such clouds of dust have been raised, that some think the old party lines, which were once so visible to all, are lost. I speak figuratively.

Mr. Young,—whose ill-advised motion, or rather its amended form, has seriously endangered the health of the goose that laid the golden egg, and made it uncertain now whether or not there will be an Election this year,—in his great speech at the outset of the matter, while dwelling on the reprehensible enormities which accompany Elections, took occasion incidentally to remind the Society of a grave infraction of the law perpetrated yearly. He quoted English and Canadian Election Laws, showing that it is illegal on the part of candidates or their agents to use other than volunteered conveyances in bringing up voters to the polls. During the Society Elections of late years the party organizations have kept hacks running to all parts of the city,—“a direct violation of the law,” said Mr. Young, solemnly, and without doubt in good faith. This amused me.

Now that he has taken to reading up the statutes, Mr. Young cannot be ignorant of the other provisions of the laws in question. Is he of opinion, too, that it has been in direct contravention of the law that on the Society's polling day all the saloons in Toronto have been accustomed to keep open house as on ordinary days?

T. O'PERR.