

The evils resulting from such questions are increased by having a "cast-iron" rule requiring a fixed percentage in each subject.

In connection with the Entrance Examination the character of the English papers shuts the High School to a large class of students who, though not brilliant in language, are possessed of ability for Mathematics or Construction. From this class come our mechanics.

XI.

1. Yes, with the exceptions noted under No. 2.

2. *Algebra*, Second Class, and *Literature*, Second and Third Class, and *English Grammar*, Second and Third Class.

In *Algebra*, questions 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 are solved on principles not explained in any authorized text book. The solution of questions 2 and 4 by the methods explained in the authorized texts would, for an average candidate, occupy two hours. Questions 7 and 9, with 2 or 4, would not be sufficient for pass.

The papers, therefore, in my opinion, would be too high even if the Examiner sought to ascertain the relative instead of the absolute standing of the candidates.

In *English Literature* a special paper is put on "Prose," while candidates were led to expect no more than a composition on the Life of Hastings.

The two papers on Literature ought to be treated and valued as one.

In this subject the standard is higher than can be reached for some time, but little exception can be taken to anything in the papers beyond the ambiguous and unintelligible form in which the questions are put.

The objection of ambiguity may also be made against the papers in Grammar, but some of the questions in that subject are particularly unfair.

In question 3, Second Class, the candidate is asked to "justify" instead of "correct" a number of errors which various authors have inadvertently made.

No. 4 is in some manner unsuitable to a class that has not studied an inflected language, and need not have been put twice in the same examination.

The selection in question 6, Third Class, is much too difficult, and the want of punctuation in lines 10 to 14 renders the piece unintelligible. The whole paper seems more difficult than that set for Second Class.

In answer to question 3 I would say that it is unparliamentary to ascribe motives, and the only remedies I would suggest are a closer adherence to the rule which requires each paper to be submitted to a committee, or an enlargement of the rule which will compel the committee to read what they must become responsible for, and greater care in proof reading.

XII.

I am sorry I have not a set of the papers before me. It is now a month since I read the questions over, but I have still a vivid recollection of the impression which their perusal made upon my mind. I think it entirely unnecessary to answer your first question. How could an examination be a fair test, when the time allowed for some of the papers was only half as long as was needed, and when the very peculiar phraseology of the examiner was such as to leave the candidate in the dark with reference to his meaning.

With regard to your second question I have to say: (1) I am not accustomed to complain about the examinations, but on this occasion I am astonished that such a set of papers could have been approved by a committee composed of men who have been practical teachers. Any man may have his hobby, any teacher may fall into strange methods of propounding his questions, but that a whole committee of examiners should adopt these vagaries and whims and even absurdities, passes comprehension. If an examiner wishes the candidates to mention those words in an extract which may have no definite grammatical relations, why needs he to talk of "distinctly classifiable," etc.? What is the need of saying "exact construction?" Why not ask the boys and girls to parse and be done with it? Surely an examiner's aim should be to gauge the acquirements of the examined rather than to show himself off, or to thrust forward his own idiosyncracies. I could name an examiner (?) that sins egregiously in this respect. That question in the Second Class Grammar paper about "inflection" and "allocation" is not a fair one for those who have not studied Latin. It would be interesting to learn how many other candidates answered that question.

Again, that poetical extract found in the Third Class Grammar paper is simply outrageous. Unless pupils happened to be familiar with the whole poem, how could they understand "live the true life no more," and "love the indifference yet to be." From the wide field of literature could not the examiner have selected something within the range of ordinary comprehension? Some nobler sentiment than the ravings of a love-sick loon might be profitably looked for. I contend that such questions as these are wholly out of place in a Grammar paper. This is not Grammar. It may belong to Literature. Really, we look for something better from a man that has taught so many years. Has his elevation turned his head?

It was impossible for any candidate to answer satisfactorily in the time given the Second Class History questions.

The questions on Grammar for both Second and Third possess this merit:—They require thought. But there was no time for thinking. The same thing is true regarding the Literature papers. The time was insufficient.

Now, regarding remedies.

The remedy lies largely with the press. Discuss! discuss!—there is no use of any other "cussing."

Let the committee carefully and fearlessly supervise every question and allow no nonsense to appear on the papers. I would even prefer a return to the old County Board system to the continuance of the present style of puzzles, perplexities, and conundrums.

I have been forced to the conviction that it would be far better to abolish the examination on Grammar altogether than to follow on in the steps of the examiners of recent years. After all, what is the value of technical grammar? There is many a man that knows book grammar to perfection and yet cannot write with clearness and elegance. On the other hand many a graceful and perspicuous writer entirely eschews the grammar of the books. Would it not be sufficient to judge of a candidate's proficiency in grammar from his style as shown in his composition. Select, for instance, History and Literature, and let a pupil's style of answering in these subjects determine his standing in Grammar.

XIII.

() Examination papers generally satisfactory.

(2) Expressions used by Mr. Seath in his papers often not understood. The matter of his papers is good and his work will be appreciated in a short time. He must, however, simplify his language, especially for entrance candidates. The teaching of Grammar is below the mark, and if much improvement is to be made in High Schools a better foundation must be laid in the Public Schools. I am glad to know that thinking rather than cramming notes is to be the order of the day after this in English Literature.

Mr. Glashan's Algebra paper was too difficult. All Mathematical Masters know how easy it is for them to dash off as good solutions as those given by Mr. Glashan, but how difficult it is to get the average scholar to work out much simpler questions than his by similar methods.

Mr. Glashan and Prof. Young also, and I may add the other examiners, should remember that the course in English has been doubled, owing partly to Prose Literature being made more extensive, and partly to Mr. Seath's manner of examining requiring more thorough work. Other parts of the course also have been extended, and it is very difficult, therefore to find time to prepare candidates for difficult papers in all subjects.

XIV.

In reply to your letter I beg leave to answer question 1 of your circular by a most emphatic No.

The Second Class Algebra, Chemistry, and Geography; the Second and Third Class English and Drawing, and the Entrance Drawing, English Grammar, Orthography, and Orthoëpy, and English Literature papers were certainly very objectionable.

The Second Class Algebra was an honor "Problem paper" and wholly outside the limit.

The English papers were so unintelligible, in consequence of peculiar phraseology, that even masters could not divine what the examiner was driving at.

The Third Class Drawing and Grammar papers were quite as difficult as Second Class papers on those subjects.