

In so far as the results of the annual departmental examinations may be taken as a criterion of the efficiency of the schools, the summing up is not as satisfactory as could be desired. About 1100 candidates, representing in round numbers 500 different schools, presented themselves during the years 1894 and 1895 at the examinations for normal school entrance, and for advance of class. Of the whole number sixty-four per cent failed to get the class applied for; thirty-two per cent failed to get any class. Of the 757 candidates who were classified, nineteen per cent were placed in Class I, forty-five per cent in Class II; and thirty-seven per cent in Class III. Only ten per cent of the whole number of applicants had applied for the lowest class. In the university matriculation and junior leaving examinations, which represent more directly the work of the high schools, 131 candidates presented themselves. Of these thirty-three per cent failed, thirty per cent passed (with conditions) in the third division, and thirty-seven per cent passed unconditionally, chiefly in the second division.

These results are somewhat disappointing; and yet it would be unfair to the teachers from whose schools the unsuccessful candidates came, to infer that inefficient teaching was the principal cause of the failures. Many of the candidates came forward prematurely, without the advice and even against the judgment of their teachers. Some of the candidates were inexperienced in methods of written examinations. The novelty of the circumstances under which they were tested would tend to produce a nervous excitement unfavorable to concentration and clearness of thought. Perhaps some of the questions submitted may have transcended the lines within which special training had been received. Yet after all reasonable allowances have been made, it must be admitted that a considerable percentage of the answers submitted to the examiners failed to show careful training, either in clearness of thought or accuracy of expression.

There is an unfair and unreasoning tendency in many minds to judge of a class by its poorest members, and the teaching profession more frequently suffers from this tendency than other classes. While we still have in the ranks of New Brunswick teachers a few who are unfitted both by nature and training to discharge the high duties of their calling, I think there can be no question that the number of such teachers is annually diminishing, that the general average stands as high in all essential qualities as that of any other province of the Dominion or state of the American Union, and that at the top we have a fair percentage of real teachers, as efficient, as earnest, of as high ideals and noble purposes, as can be found in any land.

To increase the number of such teachers, to keep out and to weed out the incompetent and unworthy, must be more and more the policy of the Education department. Accurate scholarship, at least within the limits of the required syllabus, must be insisted on. It is, of course, painful to those upon whom the responsibility chiefly rests, to close the door against honest young men and women ambitious to enter the profession, but whose unconsciousness of their own educational defects and natural incapacity proclaim at the outset their unfitness for the positions to which they aspire. We must more

and more aim to protect the trustees, the ratepayers, the children, and our honorable profession against the incapacity of unqualified and worthless teachers. The most effectual way to accomplish this is by a series of faithful and rigorous examinations before a license to teach is granted, and by an equally faithful and rigorous inspection of the schools afterwards. When it becomes manifest to the inspectors that a teacher has mistaken his calling, or has grown negligent of his duties, some method must be devised to remedy the mistake that has been made. The law of the survival of the fittest is too slow in its operation.

Under our present system the initiatory examinations for entrance to the Normal school, the course of training received there with its frequent tests both as to scholarship and professional skill, and the final examination by competent and independent examiners at the close of the Normal school course, ought to make it impossible for an unqualified candidate to obtain a license, provided the regulations are faithfully and conscientiously followed. This is a matter of vital importance and demands the strictest vigilance. With well-qualified and faithful teachers, other deficiencies will not prove a permanent obstacle to success; with poorly qualified and merely mechanical teachers the most perfect organization will avail but little.

Next to the obtaining and retaining for the service, a body of well-qualified, conscientious, earnest, enthusiastic teachers, the aim must be to perfect our courses of study, as to method, form and matter, so as to assign to each period of the child's progress towards manhood, the appropriate intellectual and moral stimuli, and to furnish the best conditions for the symmetrical development of all his powers and capacities, physical, intellectual and spiritual. This intricate problem of pedagogies is receiving at the present time such an amount of patient investigation by the ablest educationists in Europe and America as promises fruitful results. It will be our duty to keep abreast of the best thought and practice in this important matter. A third aim should be the perfection of a national system of education based on the highest ideals, so that from the nursery to the university there shall be no missing links, no overlapping of agencies, no waste of energy, no loss of time.

I was much impressed with a scheme for the organization of national education, read before the National Teachers' Association of the United States, in session at Saratoga in 1892. The writer, President Hyde, of Bowdoin College, Me., illustrated the scheme by a diagram, a copy of which I have placed upon the blackboard, as worthy of examination and study by the members of this Institute. Time will not permit me to explain it in detail, much less to present the arguments by which the proposed system was supported; but by reference to the diagram, I will endeavor to make its salient points clear. It may be premised that the system is not based on any merely utilitarian idea, but upon a conception of the object of education, which regards human life as an end in itself, and a complete and rounded manhood and womanhood as the true aim of all educational effort.

(Here followed orally an explanation of the diagram.) So far as the organization and course of study go, they are in general conformity with the scheme here out-