

One other subject should claim the attention of our Minister, during the present session. It is one that has more than once been mooted in the House, but for some reasons, which may not be specified here, it has not as yet been settled. You are aware that many of our High Schools are situated in small incorporated villages and these in such cases become the High School districts for such schools, requiring by law to furnish towards their maintenance, the difference between the actual school expenditure and the income derived from the Legislature, County grants and fees. When we remember the small percentage of pupils actually domiciled in such villages and the great majority coming from outside municipalities which are not called upon to pay a cent of what the law makes it imperative the village should pay, the injustice becomes apparent. The practical suggestion here is that legislation should be obtained in the direction of distributing counties into High School districts, and compelling County Councils to recognise such districts. We are aware that some kind of permissive legislation is already in existence on this subject, but practically it is a dead letter, and indeed were such districts determined upon the question of getting one or two hundred dollars more or less from the department would be of less importance for then, the trustees could fall back on the districts, and these would be so large that the additional taxation upon the rate-payer would not amount to more than a very modest fraction of a mill on the dollar. I am aware that in some places outside pupils pay an additional fee, but the effect of this again is to handicap the school and dwarf its very life.

The subject of training High School masters tempts my pen. This is important and presents many difficulties, but all because of this we should hasten the more slowly. We may systematize too much, that is evidently the direction in which recent official regulations point, and I venture to say that if it be pressed unduly it will, it must, result in disastrous failure. Why could it not be possible to prevent any graduate from becoming a Head Master till he had served an apprenticeship of two or more years in High School work and his teaching satisfactorily reported upon by the Inspectors. There is a regulation of this kind now in existence but we all know that it is violated frequently. The question of training assistants, involving as it does their general qualifications, presents possibly more difficulties. On this subject the most recent effort of our Minister is to disqualify all undergraduates unless they receive a special permit from the Department. We know Mr. Ross is no friend of classics, but from his recent labours on University Con-

ederation we should infer that he attaches some importance to University training. But now we can estimate the tangible value the Minister places on this Academic training; in his mind it does not equilibrate the scholastic value of a second class certificate, or a First C! We do not undervalue in any sense the intrinsic worth of such certificates, but when, say an undergraduate of the third or fourth year standing in first-class honours in one or more departments is put in the opposing scale-pan we fail to see why the certificated man should outweigh the other. Is there not here a quiet "dig" at one arm of the educational service to the exaltation of the other. There is little wonder that the regulation should have met with so much indignation in University circles—but this is only *one* example of the present tendency of the new regulations of Mr. Ross. There is this to be said in favour of the undergraduate that he at least has learned how to study, and by attending a large University he has also become aware of the fact that he is not the only man in creation, even if he has not jammed a text-book on Mental Science into himself at a Normal School where there is no one to teach it. Moreover, he has during his course become conversant with the methods adopted by professors whom we may regard as teachers at the head of their profession, and what is the evidence that undergraduates have been inefficient as High School assistants? In an experience extending over many years we have never heard of any charge of inefficiency preferred either by Inspectors or Principals against this class of assistants; and, yet, forsooth, our Minister must disqualify the whole body unless they are specially "permitted" by the Department. The object aimed at is a sinister one, and altogether unworthy of any man who would deal fairly with our educational difficulties. Yet, we admit that some training is desirable, but we strongly protest on many obvious grounds against turning even the best of our Collegiate Institutes into machines for turning out High School Assistants at so many per term. On this we have to suggest that Mr. Ross would take the money which he must apply to such Institutes with what he is now paying to certain officials for tramping round the country conducting what are erroneously described as Teachers' Institutes and with this fund arrange with one or more Universities for a regular course of lectures on Pedagogy.—I use this simply for want of a better term.

But I am afraid this letter is already too long, or I would refer to other imperfections in our present system. Possibly I may do so in a future communication.

You's, etc., ALPHA.