

1. The High School Masters say, "in the former" (the several optional groups) "we would suggest that the examinations be less mathematical and more practical in their character."

By "mathematical" questions I suppose are meant those in which results have to be calculated; while "practical" questions are those in which a knowledge of principles experimentally established, with the evidence on which the principles rest, is required.

A reference to the last examination papers will show that the questions are by no means excessively mathematical. In the Chemistry paper, 80 marks out of a total 110 are allowed for questions exclusively practical. In the Natural Philosophy paper, 68 marks (indeed on a fair judgment I might say 75) out of a total of 110 are allowed for practical or non-mathematical questions. It is absolutely necessary that some questions involving calculation should be set, otherwise there could be no assurance that the pupils understand how to apply the principles in which they are instructed. I desire to add (what the High School Masters are perhaps not aware of) that the questions on which their pupils most generally fail are not the mathematical, but the practical. If the questions were made less mathematical than at the recent examination, I am afraid that the result would be utter disaster to the candidates.

2. The High School Masters say: "In view of the fact that the grading of the High Schools and the distribution of a large portion of the Legislative grant is decided according to the results of inspection, it is, in the opinion of the H. S. Section, desirable that the H. S. Inspectors should be enabled to devote a greater amount of time to the work of inspection at their semi-annual visits." The High School Inspectors instruct me to reply as follows:—"They are sensible of the importance of devoting as much time to the inspection of the High Schools as is necessary, not only for the equitable distribution of that portion of the grant which is divided on the results of inspection, but for benefiting the schools in every way to the utmost possible extent. As regards the distribution of the grant they are satisfied that no school has suffered injustice from the amount of time devoted to its inspection; they will be glad, however, to meet the wishes of the High School Masters by making their visits in future as lengthened as circumstances may permit."

3. The High School Masters say: "That the English History presented should be confined to some particular period instead of extending, as at present, from Julius Cæsar to the present time." The High School Inspectors think it would be unwise to depart

from the system now observed for the following among other reasons:—

(a.) Teachers holding Provincial life certificates are expected, and with reason, to know the leading events at least of the history of England and Rome. (b.) One of the most valuable lessons to be derived from history is historical *proportion*, or the relative importance of historical events; another is the causes of the progress of nations in civilization and constitutional self-government, and the steps of national decadence; another is the literary growth and the distinguishing character of one period as related to others. None of these, the Inspectors think, can be obtained by the study of an isolated epoch. (c.) For a special period to be studied judiciously or to advantage its relations to the preceding age should be known before-hand, hence such a system of History-teaching belongs more properly to an advanced stage in the student's progress; besides, a more detailed examination of a period is necessary than is convenient in a High School. (d.) The true remedy is for the teachers to improve their methods.

4. With regard to the "system of notation" which the High School Masters say "should be more fully recognized in the assignment of subjects for examination to members of Central Committee," the Minister will readily understand that some members of the Committee are specially fitted to examine on some subjects, and others on others, and it is desirable that the schools of the country should have the benefit of the special attainments of the several members.

I have the honour, etc.,

(Signed) G. P. YOUNG.

To the Hon. the Minister of Education.

—IN this month's issue we can only briefly discuss the questions brought up by the foregoing correspondence. We invite in the meantime from the High School Masters an expression of opinion on the points submitted for their consideration. The course pursued by the Minister, as indicated in his letter, will be productive of great satisfaction to the profession, and we trust that in the interest of good sound healthy education the Intermediate itself may soon be numbered among the things of the past. It is a well-known fact that the High School Masters without, so far as the public are aware, a single exception, are unanimous in their estimate of the effect on education of the Intermediate examination. In many respects the old system of