

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Portage la Prairie schools will be reopened after the summer holidays with an efficient staff of six or seven teachers. Trustees have been elected and the people are to be congratulated on the selection they have made, almost all the trustees having had a large experience in school matters and being men of education and culture. The Trustees are W. R. Smart, W. E. Snider, W. W. Miller, W. A. Prest, T. A. Garland and W. Keyes.

There was a very large number of candidates in attendance on the examinations just held. The examination papers with one or two marked exceptions were easier than last year, and we trust that a larger percentage of the candidates may be successful in order that there may be a sufficient number of teachers, and that confidence in the examinations which was rudely shaken last year may be restored. The number of candidates is as follows:—Winnipeg, first, 13, second 37, third 59. Brandon, second 15, third 52. Minnedosa, second 3, third 27. Portage la Prairie, third 25. Virden, second 3, third 14. Deloraine, second 1, third 32. Birtle, second 4, third 20.

The head-line copy-book has disappeared from the business colleges of the United States and Canada, and it is dispensed with in a great number of public schools. Such a copy-book is simply an excuse for teachers who do not give penmanship the attention which it deserves. It certainly puts more life into the practice of penmanship to have the copy written in full view of the pupil. The practice upon the stereotyped copy-book is cold, stilted and mechanical, while copies suited to the varied wants of the pupils, and written by the teacher, give life and variety to the exercises. The mechanical model is produced with an eye to the beautiful solely, while legibility and speed are the real requisites for a good business penman, and these can be acquired only by constant and varied practice. The lithographed head-line is of use only when the teacher knows nothing whatever of the principles of penmanship. A teacher though he may not be able to do beautiful work will teach to better advantage by discarding the copy-book and using the black-board and pen more.

READING.

(Summary of an address given at Manitoba Teachers' Conventions, 1888, by D. J. Goggin, Principal, Manitoba Normal School.)

Reading is the correct expression, in the words of the book, of assimilated thought. It may be considered under two heads—thought-getting and thought-giving. The possession of the thought in a paragraph may be tested by (a) stating its central thought; (b) making an abstract of it; (c) paraphrasing it. The expression of the thought in a paragraph may be given (a) in the pupils own words; (b) in the words of the book.

Necessary preparatory knowledge for thought-getting includes, (1) a knowledge of words—their pronunciation, use and meaning, suitability, form; (2) a knowledge of phrases, clauses, allusions, figurative expressions.

WORDS.

Pronunciation. In the first stage, the teacher pronounces slowly and distinctly and the pupil imitates. In the second stage, the teacher leads the pupil to analyse words, to discover the powers of the letters, and by combination to master the pronunciation of regular words. In the third stage, the teacher shows the pupil how to use a dictionary and requires him to consult it when in doubt.

Use and meaning. The meaning of a word is best determined by its use. In the first stage, the pupil makes sentences containing words whose meaning he knows. In the second stage, the teacher makes sentences containing the difficult word. The pupil listens, compares, infers, and then uses it correctly in sentences of his own construction. In the third stage, when the pupil, from a consideration of the context, is unable to infer the meaning of a difficult word he consults a dictionary and by substitution, tests the fitness of the word or words selected. In advanced classes the pupil may be permitted to define a word after using it, care being taken that the word by which it is defined is its exact equivalent. Accuracy of definition, except as an act of memory, cannot be attained in primary classes.

Suitability. Very few words in our language are exactly alike in meaning. The study of synonyms compels a close scrutiny of meanings and while it makes the pupil's vo-