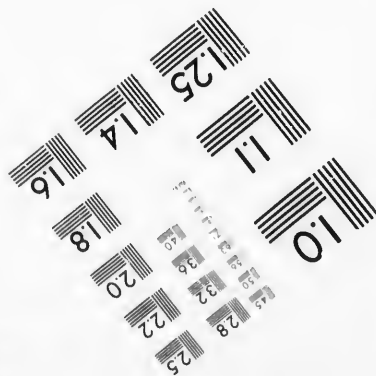
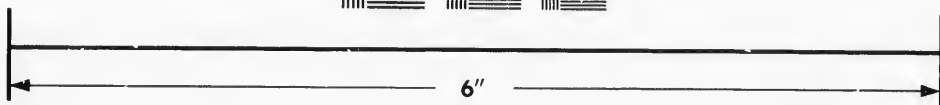
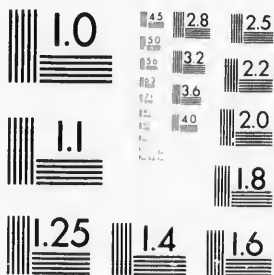


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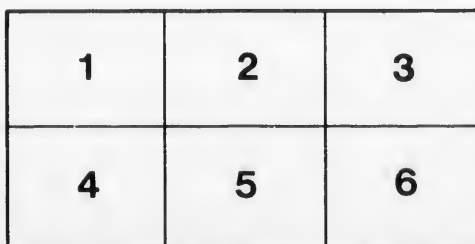
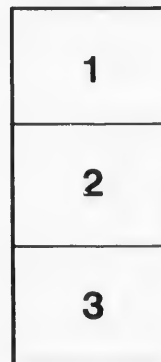
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"Some Points in our School System."

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO THE

Teachers' Association & County of Frontenac

AND

CITY OF KINGSTON,

BY THE PRESIDENT,

PROF. N. F. DUPUIS, M.A.

OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY,

AT A MEETING

Held on the Evening of September 27, 1877.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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ADDRESS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—

My first duty to-night is to thank you for your kindness in electing me to the honorable position of first President of this Teachers' Association. I feel that the position is to some extent a responsible one, and I fully appreciate the confidence which you have reposed in me. If at any time it is in my power to further the interests of education in general or of this Educational Association in particular, you may consider me at your service. I am one with you. I am a teacher who has chosen the profession of teaching for life, and it is probable that I shall continue to be a teacher during the active remainder of my days. For six years I taught in large public schools, and I have taught in my present position for the last ten years, during four of which I filled the office of Inspector of Public Schools for this city. And although not now teaching in a public school, or in any institution amenable to the present school laws, yet I ask no higher honor than to be enrolled in the noble ranks of modern teachers. X + y

Some years of careful observation and study upon the practical results of our educational system have led me to the conclusion that there are some things in our School System that are wrong in principle, and more which are burdensome in practice. I shall confine myself this evening principally to two points,

examination as a test of the qualification of a teacher, and the policy of a continual elevation of the standard of qualification. In dealing with these I shall endeavor to show in what respects and why I consider them unsatisfactory. I can assure you that I have taken up these subjects in no carping or fault-finding spirit, and that he who accuses me of so doing misinterprets my motives. It may be said that as I am not amenable to the educational authorities I am at liberty to speak my mind without fear of consequences. I disclaim liberty founded upon such a low principle. I have an advantage over the public school teacher only in that I cannot be charged with being an abnormally interested party. Who would not be at liberty to express his convictions upon the noblest institution of a free people? Who would not have a living interest in that which is the great guarantee of our freedom and the great motive power in our civilization? Who would trammel the right of an independent people to think and speak in a matter so important as this, or who would suffer himself to be hushed into silence through a fear of petty consequences? The power that would attempt it is tyrannical, and the people who submit to it are slaves.

We have an educational system in our land, which, if not very old, is at least

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very vigorous and very complex, a system which from a small and tender root has grown like the giant oak overshadowing the whole country with its extending branches.

My memory does not extend very far back into the past, but I remember well the days when our educational system was but in its childhood. I remember the time when, in this portion of the country at least, we had no qualified teachers, i. e. teachers qualified by the holding of a certificate of qualification, when we had no definite system of classification, no series of text books, no free schools and no compulsory education. In those days the County school buildings were in many cases among the poorer classes of edifices, sometimes not much better than mere hovels; ventilation was, if not unknown, at least unthought of, and only through broken windows and chinks in the walls and badly fitted floors was it possible for pure air to find an entrance and vitiated air to find an exit. The seats were pine benches upon which a generation of school boys had tried the temper of their knives, while the desks, except an uncouth looking one here and there, were too often among the things invisible. Now some of our schoolhouses rank among our finest and most beautiful public buildings, and a profusion of modern means is brought into requisition for the purpose of rendering them not only beautiful but at the same time healthful and convenient. The desks and seats of the most approved pattern and made of iron and walnut are, as far as finish and material go, superior in beauty and cost to the major portion of furniture in private houses.

In those almost forgotten days the teacher was usually some discharged soldier who found the profession of teaching to serve the double purpose of eking out a small pension and preventing him from living an otherwise idle life, or if an educated man, one educated for a profession entirely different from that of teaching. Such things as Certificates of Qualification were unknown, and within my own memory, the highest boast of some of these instructors was to be able

to solve the puzzlers in Gough's Arithmetic, to write a fine legible hand and to know nothing of grammar. At present teachers are men and women who, having spent many years at our lower medium and higher schools, come into the practice of their profession versed (or at least supposed to be) in all the ICES and OLOGIES, and bearing each an official document which has been signed, sealed and delivered, and which testifies to the fitness of the bearer for teaching the young idea how to shoot.

In those days to which I refer we had no fixed school system, no elaborate educational machinery to grind out scholars by a sort of mathematical rule, no master minds sitting at headquarters to do the thinking for an army of teachers, and thus to render their work as much automatic and as little intellectual as possible. Each tutor had to think, and plan, and devise as well as carry into effect.

How different are matters now? Teaching has risen to the dignity of a profession, and although not a profession which many choose for life, yet in some of its departments, if not all, it is certainly worthy in every sense to be styled a profession. Teachers are prepared with a large amount of labour and skill, and therefore expense. They are required to know not only as much as they will ever be called upon to teach in a public school, but in the vast majority of cases a great deal more. So much more that I fear it is a common thing for a considerable portion of their tutorial stores to become in time mouldy and worthless for the want of being used.

And when the teacher comes into his school how beautifully and conveniently everything is arranged. A rigid system of classification has organized the pupils, and they stand before him, each in his own particular *caste*, as no intermixing is allowed.

It is vain for the intelligent teacher to ask, "But are there here no Sheridans or Scotts or Dicks in boyhood's disguise?—no children who are likely to suffer by this classification in hard and fast lines? and to which a different apportionment of subjects might be advan-

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taguous?" The only answer is: The School Law of the Province has arranged the classification. It has been thought out by master minds, and they have come to the conclusion, or seem to have come to the conclusion, that all children are alike in their mental capacities, or at least ought to be. Upon this supposition they have supplied you with a classification which is to be your guide, and they require you as a good and faithful teacher so to govern yourself that the Inspector, when asked if your school is conducted according to law, may be enabled truthfully to answer "yes."

From a small beginning, such as we find in every new country, our school system has, in the short space of about 30 years, grown into an immense organization, sending its ramifications into every hamlet in the land, and vieing in importance with our most essential legislative machinery. Nor has this increase in educational powers and appliances been unattended by an increase in educational expenses; direct intercourse between the humble teacher and the lofty intellectual magnate being scarcely admissible; a whole series of intermediate paid officers has been interpolated between these two extreme terms of our school system.

There is no doubt that there are a great many features in our present system with regard to which we have reason to feel proud. The immense strides we have made in the remarkably short time already mentioned, especially when compared with the tardy progress in the same direction, of many older countries, the position in which our educational system is believed to stand at the present time, and the efficiency it is generally believed to possess, are things upon which we have reason to congratulate ourselves. But it appears to me that our educational system has been overdone—that there have been too many changes made from time to time without sufficient cause and without sufficient experience of any one characteristic upon which to ground a trustworthy conclusion as to its success or failure. We are, in fact, bearing testimony to the correctness of the remark made by Mr. Bowring, in a late lecture

at the Royal Institution, that "the science of education is in advance of the art," and in which he urged that, like medicine, pedagogics should be made a science of observation upon the result obtained. This, I believe, has not been done, and it occurs to me very forcibly that the advantages of our present school system over that of 20 or 25 years ago are to a great extent, counterbalanced by the greater cost to the country of carrying out a system as rigid in its nature as a military code, and burdened with an array of scarcely necessary paraphernalia. This running of an educational system at high-pressure can be likened to nothing better than the present prevailing desire of crossing the ocean in less and still less time, but it is an admitted fact that to double the speed of a vessel is to double the danger and quadruple the expense, and yet in this particular of speed one line of vessels tries to outstrip others regardless of consequences.

It may be argued that a good educational system is one of the bulwarks of a free people, and that no amount of elaboration is too much which tends to increase its efficiency among the masses. The whole of this I fully and promptly admit, but the question still remains as to what is the most efficient school system and how it is to be attained. Now it is because I do not think that our present school regulations are as well adapted to the wants of the communities which they affect as they might be, and as all of us would like them to be, that I take this opportunity of pointing out what I consider to be faults in them.

Let us consider first, then, the qualification of teachers, i. e., the legal qualification. Every person who has had any particular connection with school matters during several years past must be aware that there has been a constant tendency to raise what is called the standard of qualification. Some years ago we had our old-fashioned Boards of Examiners, composed of men, some of whom might be bare enough in the literary qualification of an examiner of teachers, but who had common sense to aid them when literature failed, and sufficient breadth of

sympathy to dispense with rigid rules and to make their deliberations subservient to the wants of those particular districts of country from which they were gathered together. This state of things was swept away by extensive legislation, and County Boards of Examiners appointed as we now have them. At first power was given to the County Boards to grant second and third class certificates. Whether this privilege was abused or not I am not able to say, but the authorities, either through losing confidence in these Boards or through a desire of centralizing everything in Toronto, or of aggrandizing themselves, or of obtaining more power, have lately limited the functions of County Boards to that of granting third class certificates only. Now this may be well enough, but it seems to me an unnecessary multiplication of officials.

It may indeed be argued that as second and first class certificates are for life, the greatest care and precautions should be taken that they be not only uniform but be granted upon well attested merits.

To this argument two exceptions may be taken. First—Very few of the persons who obtain certificates and commence their career as teachers choose the profession of public school teaching for life, and still fewer enter upon it with an intention of doing so. I believe it is far within the limits of fact to say that of those who, under proper certificates pass some portion of their life in teaching in a public school, not one in five follows it as a fixed profession. This being, the state of affairs, what necessity is there for this wonderful uniformity and these life certificates. Admitted that a candidate procures a second or even first class certificate, and that under its protecting aegis he passes a few years of his early life as a public school teacher. For various reasons he becomes dissatisfied and believes that some other business will be more congenial and profitable. He goes into trade upon the small capital which he has earned by teaching—a mercantile or a manufacturing business which occupies all his time and energy, quite excluding literary pursuits from his mind. He succeeds for a period of ten or fifteen

years, a monetary crisis comes and he fails. He fails but he is not discouraged. Rummaging among his papers he turns up his life certificate as a second or first class qualified teacher, and upon the strength of that he makes application for a superior position in one of our prominent public schools. Now I ask, could this man, unless he had powers not usually possessed by humanity, be considered a *qualified* teacher in a *literary* sense? Could he now pass the examination which he once passed and upon the strength of which he holds his qualifying document? If not, then he is a qualified teacher and an unqualified teacher both. You will understand that I do not mean to assert that such a person might not be a good and efficient teacher, but that a very undue importance is attached to this idea of absolute uniformity in examinations, and that except in regard to persons who follow teaching, or some literary occupation equivalent to it, as a profession, this theory of *life certificate* is certainly a very questionable one.

Second.—Mere scholastic qualification is not a guarantee of a good teacher.

It is an idea too commonly prevailing that multifarious knowledge is the great essential in a teacher—that if a person is acquainted with arithmetic, and algebra, and geometry, and English grammar, and English literature, and if he has a smattering of botany, and zoology, and geology, and chemistry, and knows a little about the higher applications of mathematics and a little about human physiology and music and drawing, and still less about the great subject of ethics, he must of necessity be a good teacher. In fact the principle of examinations for teachers, if not founded upon this idea, at least tends to strengthen it, for all that an examination can do is to test the candidate's knowledge—it may be mere book knowledge, the veriest theoretical knowledge—upon these subjects. I do not question for a moment the utility of such knowledge to the teacher, or even to the *man*, for true culture of any kind has a tendency to expand the mind and

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sharpen the intellect, and bring the individual more into consonance with his natural surroundings. But the teacher must possess something beyond these subjects. He must have a peculiar tact, a certain aptitude for teaching and the faculty of imparting his knowledge to others. He must be a disciplinarian as well as a teacher, for without the former the latter is little better than useless; and he must have a sufficient knowledge of human nature, for the school teacher, at least, must, in the majority of cases, deal with parents as well as with children. These properties form the teacher, and to a great extent they are gifts of nature, so that in this sense the teacher is "born, not made;" and no amount of examination can test the existence of these essentials any more than it could test the existence of kindness or bravery or nobleness in an individual's character. Some of our greatest scholars; men who stand at the very top of the particular subject which they profess, whose names are household words, and a part at least of whose business it is to teach, are nevertheless very indifferent or even poor teachers. Take up the writings of various men upon the same subject and mark the difference in their styles. One's words flow along like some well-timed strain of music, in his language there is neither excess nor deficiency, his explanations are lucid, and the ideas which you receive from him are the very ideas which he intended to convey to you—in short he is distinguished by grace and simplicity and perspicuity. Another seems to frame his sentences in an awkward, crank manner, so that it is sometimes difficult to know at which end of the sentence you should begin in order to get the best idea of the writer's meaning. Or he is verbose and buries ideas in such a depth of words that the worth of the treasure, if you find it, is not equivalent to the work of removing the rubbish, and the character of his writings may be summarily and popularly stated by saying that they are as "clear as mud."

But these are differences in the men rather than in their education. It is said of the

great Sir Isaac Newton that it was with difficulty that he succeeded in explaining even common-place things to his friends; whereas I have good authority for saying that that renowned and popular writer, famed alike for the beauty and simplicity of his style, Dr. Thomas Dick never succeeded in mastering the first Book of Euclid.

If it were not for becoming personal I might illustrate the same truth by referring to not a few living and well-known persons, who although ranking high as men of erudition are nevertheless capable of taking but a low place as teachers. In fact I have been told of one well-known Professor of Natural Philosophy, in whose class a student read the whole of De Quincey's work during one session, and pleaded in justification that to listen to the lectures was so much time thrown away. And I have no doubt that many of you can call up illustrative cases—cases in which first-class teachers legally have been but third-class teachers practically, keeping but indifferent schools, seldom giving satisfaction and frequently moving from place to place; while some holding third-class certificates have the happy faculty of entwining themselves about the affections of both parents and pupils, in whose school's everything goes as merry as a marriage bell, whose society is courted because it is appreciated (and I don't refer solely to ladies), and whose resignations call forth many a tear and many a sigh and many a benediction from those among whom they labored. We see then how inefficient examinations are in testing the real merits of a teacher.

I have said that the essentials of a good teacher are, in a sense, moral as well as intellectual, and that they are not the necessary result of any system of scholastic education. But it does not follow that these may not be to some extent acquired, or if you please, developed. It is a well established fact that by constant attention a person may improve his moral faculties as well as his purely intellectual ones. This improvement is, as far as teachers are concerned, not a result of book education, but of practical school

work, and the test, and the *only* test of a *good* teacher is success in teaching. The teacher who, after some years of probation, has earned a worthy record for punctuality, for perseverance, for good example, and last, but by far the greatest, for general success, is in possession of credentials more trustworthy than all the certificates that could be granted by the Educational Department, based, if necessary, upon a hundred examinations. Examination is at best but a crude method of testing a person's qualifications for almost any occupation, so much depends upon personal character and idiosyncrasy, and yet it appears to me that our Educational Department has made it all-important, the great touchstone by which to try teachers.

In connection with this part of my address there is one subject in particular with which I wish to deal. In the *BRITISH WHIG* of the 19th inst. there is a copy of a letter from Dr. Hodgins, Deputy Minister of Education, in which, when referring to this city, he says: "I can scarcely suppose that the city Board would employ third class teachers." Now with Dr. Hodgins's presuppositions or with his particular sentiment upon this subject I have nothing to do; it is the principle involved which I wish to bring before you. Why should this city not employ third class teachers? You will bear in mind that the *third class* is here employed in its legal and not in its practical sense, and that as I have already pointed out a person having the lowest legal status may have the highest efficiency as a teacher. Is it then because the city is so exalted that its dignity might suffer if it stooped so low as to employ a teacher holding only a third class certificate? Or is it because we are such a refined and cultured people that it would be doing an injustice to our children to allow them to associate with such a crude and ignorant being as a third class teacher? Or is it because our children are born into the world with a greater development of intellect than country children, or are so precocious that before the school age of five years has been reached they have outstript the

abilities of a third class teacher? Such arguments for the non-employment of third class teachers are too absurd to require answering, and yet I fail to see that any stronger ones can be brought forward. But if there are any reasons for granting third class certificates at all—if there are any reasons for employing persons holding such certificate in the counties, and in any parts of the counties, then there is an equal number of reasons why they should be employed in cities. Our children come into the world as ignorant as any class of children whatever. In this respect they stand no higher than the Bushman or the Hottentot. Greater capabilities they have it is certain, but they both begin life at the same stage of knowledge, and that stage is zero. Our children are no more precocious than those of our neighbors in the adjoining county, except it be in learning to play truant, annoy the community and quote street ribaldry. Come with me to some of the larger schools in this city and I will show you classes of not less than 60 children in which the highest degree of advancement is to spell out words of four or five letters in little reading lessons in the first or lowest book, to count possibly to a hundred, and to be able to add together a few figures, while many out of the 60 are still at the very rudimentary work of trying to distinguish between round O and crooked S. And yet the Trustees and Inspector of this city are supposed to believe that a person qualified in a moral aspect, and who has passed a creditable examination in reading and writing and arithmetic, in English grammar and analysis, in composition and some other subjects, is not fit, or does not *know enough* to teach such children; for it is supposed that they would not employ third class teachers. Verily I think we have reason to congratulate ourselves that our City Board of Trustees is not composed of men so celebrated for obtuseness as would be indicated by such a course. And when we bear in mind that the state of things which I have described must continue to exist as long as the world continues to be populated, and that it must exist as

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well in cities as in country places, and because of the denser population it must be more extensive and prominent in city schools than in county ones, it would seem more reasonable to suppose that instead of third class teachers not being employed in the cities, there should be a perpetual demand for them, and a much more general one than in country schools where often the same teacher has to give instruction to all classes from the first to the fourth or fifth. To educate a young man as a first or second class teacher requires to be educated under existing regulations, and then to put him at permanent work in teaching a number of classes not one of which is advanced beyond the very rudiments of education as contained in the child's primer, appears to me like arming a soldier with helmet and sword and shield and all the accoutrements of war to do battle with a mouse.

But this leads me on to a consideration of teachers' certificates and examinations in general. Before the days of teachers' examinations and teachers' certificates, it did sometimes occur, as might be expected, that persons professing to be teachers obtained situations in schools in which they were really too illiterate to supply the demands made upon them by their pupils. This certainly was an evil although I am not aware that it ever led to any serious consequences. After our school system became more matured and what are now known as old country boards were established, teachers were examined and graded into first, second and third classes as we have them now. After this it was a very uncommon case to find a teacher who did not know enough, in a mere literary sense, to teach the pupils placed under his instruction. The few cases that did occur were mostly in the better class of country schools, where High School instruction was not available, and a few, probably one or two, or at most three of the older pupils, some of them verging upon manhood or womanhood, would, through superior intellectual powers, outstrip their companions, and thus reach the highest point of development of which the school was capable. But if

we consider that competition is a great stimulus to exertion, we must conclude that such pupils committed a fundamental error in remaining at public schools where there could be but little competition, instead of going into a High School where they could find plenty of it.

Nevertheless, there has been a constant and successful effort for the last few years to raise the standards of qualification, that is, you will bear in mind, literary qualification, for the different classes of certificates. Not satisfied with advancing these for first and second class certificates, the authorities have also raised that for the third or lowest, until now third class examination papers have come to be as difficult as first class examination papers formerly were. Where this state of affairs is going to end I don't profess to be prophet enough to tell.

If it were a notable fact that the children of these days had become so wonderfully intellectual that the average teacher succeeded in exhibiting his ignorance rather than his erudition before them; or if a person's knowledge of Canadian history and algebra and mechanics supplied him with a new and augmented means of teaching the rudimentary subjects of Reading and Spelling and simple Arithmetic; or if it strengthened his moral efficiency as a teacher and endowed him with a more consistent firmness, a more genial kindness or a deeper insight into human nature, then by all means raise the standard.

But none of these things are true, and these are not therefore the motives for this peculiar progress of the last few years.

It may be said that it is necessary that History and Botany and Book-keeping and Physiology, &c., should be taught to some of the higher classes in the Public Schools. Admitting this to be the case, it is well known to those acquainted with the schools of the city that out of 28 teachers employed only about 3 are required to teach these subjects in even a rudimentary form, and I believe that Kingston city schools will compare favorably with any in the Province. If, then, this is an argument for raising the

standard of first-class teachers it is certainly no argument for simultaneously raising that of third-class ones. If certain subjects *must* be taught in a particular school any intelligent Board of Trustees would see the necessity of procuring a teacher properly qualified for the position. But where is the necessity of engaging a teacher who is acquainted (superficially of course) with every subject under the sun, when his duties do not require him to teach one-fourth of these subjects? I have not said that it is injurious to the pupils or the school or the community to do so, but I ask where is the necessity? for if it is not necessary it can be looked upon merely as a waste of energy.

The real purpose of raising the standard of qualification for the several certificates, seems, as far as I understand it, to have been a noble one, viz.: that of increasing the general rate of remuneration received by teachers for their services. The projectors of this scheme probably reasoned somewhat in this way. By increasing the difficulties of the examinations we will decrease the number of teachers capable of passing them, and thus bring the supply beneath the demand. This, as a matter of course, must tend to augment teachers' salaries.

But they reasoned from false premises, and consequently came to unwarrantable conclusions. The principles of political economy, when applied to a school system tell us that such increase, if of any importance, could only be temporary at best, or take place in a peculiar manner. Experience, as seen in the Medical and Law Societies of Ontario, teach us a similar lesson. Both of these societies have endeavored to curtail the number of young men passing into these professions by making their examinations more difficult. But have they succeeded? By no means. There are more students at medicine and law now than there ever were before in this country.

And it can be easily shown that the physician or the lawyer stands in a position advantageous to that of the teacher. In a city like this, which is pretty well supplied with physicians, a new one may

upon an office and succeed in his profession without throwing any of the others out of business. The only effect will be to diminish the practice of each of the others to a small extent; and thus a given locality might possibly support, in a meagre way of course, twice the number of physicians which it normally supports. And the same is true in regard to lawyers. But nothing of this kind holds when we turn to the profession of teaching. For simplification's sake let us confine ourselves to this city and suppose that it is isolated from all the surrounding country. We employ 28 teachers, which is equivalent to saying that we have for public education in this city 28 schools. The number of schools depends mainly upon the population and keeps pace with it. Unless population increases there will be no increase in the number of schools. If, then, a 29th teacher comes into the city, he cannot do similarly to an additional physician or lawyer and build himself up a school at the expense of the other schools, but can get a situation only by supplanting one of the teachers already engaged. You will bear in mind here that I am speaking only of Public Schools, and that I have no reference to private schools whatever. As a consequence, then, upon our former supposition that we are isolated from surrounding districts, the supernumerary teacher is left to one of two courses, either to seek for some business other than that of public school teaching, or to get a position in one of the 28 schools by underbidding some of his fellow teachers. We can thus understand how it is that a surplus of teachers produces that peculiar competition which is so calculated to reduce teachers' salaries. It seems, also, at first sight, that if the standard be so raised as to create a scarcity of teachers, salaries will be increased in proportion to this scarcity. But a little consideration will correct this idea. A few years ago the standard was suddenly raised when what are now called New Board Certificates were first granted, and hundreds of teachers were suddenly rendered legally unqualified. Now if we were to cancel one-half the medical licenses in

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this city, the remaining physicians would each have twice as large a practice and consequently receive twice as high an income, since the income in this case must be inversely proportional to the number of physicians. Not so, however, with the teacher. Be they few or many each teacher can hold but *one* school, and as it is necessary that all the schools should be supplied, the Education Department has to step in and in a clumsy way fill up the vacancies by what are called "permits." The teachers who could qualify, certainly had a better *choice* of schools than before, but I believe I am safe in saying that it made but very little difference in the average salaries paid to teachers. If, moreover, all the schools are to be kept open or in operation, a deficiency of teachers, of some kind, is impossible, while a redundancy is impracticable. And this is true quite independently of the character of the standard of qualification.

It appears from this that increasing the difficulties of the examinations does not, and can not, decrease the number of acting teachers qualified by both certificate and "permit," and that it does not necessarily increase teachers' salaries, or if it increases them it does so only to a small extent or in a certain manner. A teacher's salary depends principally upon two things, the wealth of the community in which he labors, and the kind of work he has to do. If the community be poor he must be content with a low salary, and if he does the lower and simpler kind of work he cannot expect to be as highly paid as if engaged upon work of a higher type. In the light of these considerations it appears to me that while there can be no objection to a high standard for first-class teachers, the raising of the standard for the lowest class of teachers is neither profitable nor prudent.

Some years ago an attempt was made by the Rev. Dr. Ryerson to raise teachers' salaries upon a different basis. He proposed to fix a minimum salary to be paid by each section, and he visited the different counties setting forth his views and testing the sentiments of the people upon the matter. But the coun-

try was not prepared for anything even approaching sumptuary laws, and the proposal was so poorly supported that it was quietly abandoned. It was shown at that time that in poor back country sections, where people find it extremely difficult to gather in enough during the summer to support them through a long inclement winter, it would be not only absurd but simply impossible to collect even one-half of Dr. Ryerson's minimum salary. This state of things is still in existence, and where it is not even quite so bad the schools are mostly filled with the Department's fourth class teachers, namely, those teaching under permits. And yet I can say, without fear of contradiction, that those schools need and should have a more highly qualified grade of teachers than the lowest schools in this city; for the country school may contain classes as high as the third or fourth, while our lowest ones are confined to children of the first. And yet the Department allows teachers with a permit to preside over the higher school, while indicating that teachers who hold a third class certificate are not qualified for the lower. Admirable consistency! A later attempt at creating a general increase in teachers' salaries was the one to which I have alluded, viz., the raising of the standard of qualification, or the making of the examinations for certificates more difficult. This also, for reasons already pointed out, has failed of success, and now very much as formerly a few teachers in liberal and wealthy localities receive good salaries, while many in poor sections must be willing to take just what their employers can afford to give them. The last effort seems to be that of driving third class teachers out of the cities, in the hope that if the School Boards are compelled to engage second class teachers where they now engage third class ones, they will as a matter of course give higher salaries. But it seems to me an anomalous way of raising salaries to degrade a second class teacher to the working status of a third in order that the former may be able to replace the latter.

I have no confidence in this last

scheme, as the only purpose it can serve is to make second class certificates of no more monetary value than third class certificates now are, besides it is an unjust tampering with individual rights. If third class certificates as they now stand are to be recognized at all, then those holding them have a right to accept of positions where they can get them, provided they know themselves to be competent to do the required work.

Our educational authorities seem to have yet to learn that the only way to successfully, permanently and generally increase the salaries of teachers is by increasing the general wealth and prosperity of the country; that every advance in the latter will bring a corresponding one in the former, and that any attempt to overrule this indissoluble connection must end in a final failure.

It is for reasons like these that I believe our present school system to be in advance of the other developments of our country—a system for the next century. It is true that there are some portions of our Province in which it may work passably well, but in these it would succeed even better if it were less trammelled by petty legislation and an interminable list of regulations and if it gave more freedom of thought and action to local workers. But to the greater portion of the country it is not well adapted. It requires too high a standard of literary education for its lower teachers, a requisition which means a great amount of

time, work, and expense, and then has the means of offering only too low a remuneration for the labour expended. There is not the least doubt that many of our young men, sooner or later, discover that their salaries and prospects as teachers are not a sufficient return for the many weary hours which they have dragged out in mental labour, in order to prepare themselves for the examinations, and that accordingly they turn their backs upon teaching, and find better remunerations and a brighter future in other professions. As for our young women they always have peculiar tastes, and if they leave a large public school for a small private one it cannot be wondered at.

Finally, I believe that with the experience which we now possess, our school system might be vastly improved by certain amount of remodelling. ~~But as I have already taxed your attention for a sufficiently long time I cannot hope, now to lay before you any elaboration of the changes which I would consider profitable. Should opportunity occur I may do so at some future time.~~ Thanking you for your kind attention, I wish every success in the working of this Association, and I look hopefully forward to the time when these Associations may be an educational power for good in our land, and may become useful in modifying those narrow and rigid regulations which are too apt to be originated at headquarters.

