

EXTRACT from REPORT on SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

THE general result is a very disappointing one. With every desire to err, if we erred at all, rather on the side of leniency than of severity, we have been able to pass only 14 per cent. of the candidates, while at a very moderate estimate 20 per cent. of the papers are practically valueless. We venture to indicate what are in our opinion the causes of so large a percentage of failures.

1. *Many of the candidates lack the necessary intellectual qualifications for the work.* Their general education is at fault to a degree none but an examiner would credit. Their writing, spelling, composition are in some cases alike unsatisfactory. The writers show a lamentable ignorance of the meanings of common words. For example, in numerous instances "*arbitrary punishment*" is interpreted as "*corporal punishment*," "*oral examination*" as equivalent to "*object-lesson*," "*inductive teaching*" is confounded with "*collective*," and with "*simultaneous exercises*." One candidate speaks of "the words we use in our *calibre*."

Other evidence of defective intelligence is furnished by the inability of many candidates to perceive the plain drift of a question, unless, as we sometimes suspected, they wilfully shut their eyes to it, and addressed themselves to a subject they thought they could discuss more satisfactorily. Be this as it may, numerous answers were totally irrelevant. The following is one out of many examples:—

Q. "What means would you employ to give your pupils a proper sense of their mutual responsibilities as members of a society? What is the importance of doing this?"

A. "Compulsory attendance. Appointment and retention of teachers solely in hands of a Government department, thereby showing the taxpayers that the teachers are not simply and solely the paid servants of the parents."

Disorderly habits of thought, confusion of ideas, and incoherency of statement seemed rather the rule than the exception in the papers.

2. *Another cause of failure is, as might be anticipated, defective professional knowledge*, arising in many cases perhaps from inexperience of the work, in others from neglect of study or from injudiciously-directed reading. Presumably a good many of the candidates have been pupil-teachers. If so, it is a pity they should have passed through their apprenticeship without acquiring a truer knowledge of their proper life-business.

It was particularly disappointing to witness the steady way in which the candidates avoided all questions of principle. Nearly 40 per cent. of them shirked Section IV. ["Principles of Teaching"], and upwards of 75 per cent. declined Section VI. ["Discipline"], while the remaining answers were often of little value.

3. *We cannot but think that gross carelessness is also responsible for a number of failures.* In no other way can we account for the repeated violations of the rules of the examination, and for the neglect of the most important sections of the paper, which were left till last, in spite of the printed advice of the examiners, and were abandoned unfinished (the writers uniformly said) for want of *time*! This carelessness was further shown in the disgraceful untidiness and wretched writing of some of the papers, stamping their authors at once as unfitted in these respects for the teacher's office. It would be well for all candidates to bear in mind that they are examined as teachers, and are expected throughout their papers to display teacherlike qualities.

4. *The variation in the general style of the paper* itself no doubt also increased the number of failures, as those who had undergone a course of "special preparation" were the more readily detected. There is reason to think the highest aim of some candidates is not professional efficiency, but just by hook or by crook to pass the examination—no matter how barely.

Perhaps it will be helpful to some unsuccessful candidates if we point out what seemed the most noteworthy defects in the answers to Sections I., II., and III. The time-tables presented this difficulty: They were evidently in many cases not original, but apparently "district" time-tables, presumably sanctioned by competent authority. The question then arose, Whom were we really criticising? However, our duty was plain, and we can only say that anything more unskilful and unsatisfactory than some of the models submitted to us could hardly have been compiled by the most uninstructed candidate. On the other hand there were some really good time-tables. To go into detail:—

The amendments suggested in the answers to Question 1 would often only have made confusion worse confounded, as the writers would have seen had they tabulated their proposals. The first part of the question was very much better answered than the second. No doubt it is easier to criticise than to amend.

The theoretical part of Question 2 was either evaded or answered very badly, while the time-table submitted was usually anything but satisfactory. The teacher was rarely unassisted, and would sometimes have needed three or four assistants to enable him to cope with the work presented for the six classes. When will teachers generally recognize the impossibility of teaching six classes single-handed, and learn the advisability of grouping small standards in three or four classes and of allowing sufficient time for a lesson to enable attention to be given to each standard in the group? The infant routine, the special point of the question, was generally dreary in the extreme, and even in some time-tables where kindergarten exercises were liberally provided the teacher was too busily employed elsewhere to give them any attention throughout the week. It would be curious to know what the compilers understood by kindergarten exercises.

The practice of teaching arithmetic and writing simultaneously throughout the school was adopted in many time-tables. Yet it is voted unsatisfactory, except in the very smallest schools, by teachers of acknowledged skill and experience.

It is evident that the bulk of the time must be given to the lower standards, and that the upper ones can get very little teaching. It would not be difficult to make other satisfactory arrangements for teaching writing to one section of the school at a time.

Some of the time-tables showed a want of common-sense on the part of the compilers, as when we were told that classes 2, 3, and 4 would all read *out of the same book*, or that an object-lesson would be given to all the classes at the same time.