

machinery is truly commendable. Let me indulge in a bit of prophecy—if, indeed, it requires the vision of an iconoclast: In eight years Nebraska will have the most efficient school system in the Union.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS' CONVENTION.

The convention of county superintendents from the counties south of the Platte assembled in the Supreme Court room on the afternoon of the 11th inst. A convention was held for the North Platte district in February. The object had in view by the State Superintendent in calling these conventions was, that each might be profited by the united wisdom of all, in regard to many important matters of school policy; that uniform methods of dealing with many intricate problems constantly arising in the administration of our school law, might be adopted; and to learn the needs and desires of the people through the superintendents, in reference to further legislation on our school system. The dignity, decorum, and discretion apparent in all the measures and proceedings of the convention warrants the assertion that it was the best deliberative body we have had the pleasure of observing in the state. There was no pedantry or plethoric fulminations, but a tone of calm thought and grave inquiry pervaded every action. We are proud to know that Nebraska, even under the present system of county superintendency, has so many able men in that responsible position, lengthily and able address by the State Superintendent.

The meeting was opened by a Superintendent, presenting various topics for consideration, and stating his views on many features of the school system, especially that part pertaining to the duties and responsibilities of the county superintendent. These topics were assigned to committees, and their reports upon the various points submitted constituted the main work of the convention. Among the various topics considered the most important was, "The qualifications and election of county superintendents." We give the substance of the resolution adopted on this point: These officers should be elected for a term of three years by a convention of school directors, provided that the decision of the convention may be revoked by a board of examiners, consisting of three members, including the State Superintendent, upon a petition of one-fourth of the directors; if the candidate fail to pass in an examination. In case of rejection the second choice of the convention shall become superintendent under the same restrictions. In case of a second rejection, or resignation, or death, the State Superintendent shall appoint.

The candidate must have had actual experience in teaching within five years preceding the election, or have previously held the office, and his qualification, in no case, to fall below that required for a first-grade certificate.

This we consider a most wise resolution and, if adopted, it will remove this office from the hands of politicians. Heretofore it has been bandied about by "court house rings" strengthen other portions of the ticket having more emolument. Another advantage, sure to follow, would be the establishment of a stated salary, sufficient

to add dignity to the office and secure to the best talent in the county. To establish a regular and liberal salary under existing circumstances, would be a great risk, for, in many cases, the people might better afford to pay \$2,000 to the man forced upon them by political intrigue to bribe him to keep out of the schools entirely.

Several other important matters were considered at length which our space will not allow us to mention. The county superintendents of the state propose to submit a memorial to the next legislature with the names of two thousand teachers appended, asking for these necessary provisions. We trust our legislators will consider them wisely and favorably.

REVIEWS.

Our honored Chancellor favors us with many good things in his morning chapel lectures. We begin to look forward to them with pleasant anticipation. The Subject of one of them recently was the benefits and objects of reviews. Like most valuable things we happen upon (of course we mean in a purely mental sense) we have made the substance of the ideas he presented a part of our own meager store. By the way, is not this the manner after all in which we acquire the choicest mental treasures we possess, the truest mental culture? He who seizes a good idea or thought wherever he finds it, stores it away in his own mind, reflects upon it, ingrafts it into his own being, makes it a part of his individuality, and assimilates it with his own thoughts, until a thousand new correlative ideas and thoughts, previously vague and undefined notions, are suddenly aroused into beautiful and perfect reality, as if moved by some powerful touchstone, is the truly original man. He does not, like the despicable plagiarist, purloin somebody else's brains, but accepts a noble thought to inspire his own genius, as the poet does the influence of Nature's scenes, beautiful and grand, to inspire the music of his song, or the artist the matchless and exquisite combination of colors in the glowing sunset, laid on by the hand of Omnipotence, to impart additional loveliness of conception to his canvas. We do not mean, however, to shift the weakness of the few observations we intend to offer on reviews to the Chancellor's shoulders—he would probably consider it a very doubtful compliment.

The great object of the review of the term's work we have begun, is to systematize and more firmly collect into a perfect unity the facts in each science we have passed over during the term. During the ordinary and monotonous routine of lessons and recitations, even the best students are frequently hurried and often feel perplexed in reference to certain points. The thread of the argument often seems to be broken—and the connection between the parts of the subject is lost. The mind is dissatisfied with the work accomplished.

The true student welcomes the season of review; not because his work is finished, for he has need of increased energy, though, in some respects, it is a relaxation, but because he may now calmly reflect upon his term's work, clear up the vague points, more carefully scan the subject as a whole, and find and unite the broken chain of argument, until he thoroughly comprehends it. Systematized knowledge is the only real knowl-

edge. The student in the review should so perfectly arrange the topics of each branch that, as a perfect gem of knowledge without blemish, he may lay it away in the imperishable casket of his mind, to be an eternal and increasing source of wealth and pleasure to the possessor.

Another advantage of the review is, that the student may collect all the collateral knowledge bearing upon the subject in hand, study the history of its progress, learn something of the men who have been celebrated in connection therewith, and in fact take a broader and more scholarly view of it as a unit. We can acquire but little at most in school. As some one has said, "We can scarcely learn what there is to be learned;" but we should strive to have each stone in the foundation we are laying, strong and perfect, that the superstructure of knowledge we build thereon, during a life of struggle and experience, may be secure, strong and beautiful.

MORRILL'S ENDOWMENT BILL.

Mr. Morrill, of Vermont, has introduced a bill in Congress to provide for the further endowment of Agricultural colleges, and also to create a permanent national school fund. The following is a brief abstract:

The proceeds of all the public lands of the government hereafter sold, within stated limits, shall constitute a general fund, to be invested in U. S. bonds bearing five per cent. interest.

This provision is not to interfere with any law relative to homesteads, pre-emptions, or soldiers' bounty lands. One half of the increase of this fund, as it accrues, is to be apportioned to the several states and territories and the District of Columbia for the support of "free education in the public schools." The remaining one half to be appropriated to the several states for the support of Agricultural Colleges as follows: One half to be divided equally among the several states, and the other half in proportion to the number of their respective senators and representatives; provided that the annual income to any state for this purpose may reach an amount equal to five per centum on 400,000 acres at the net price of one dollar per acre, and in addition thereto, 30,000 acres for each senator and representative, at the time the college was established. When this amount is reached, the same fixed amount shall be apportioned for the support of public schools. Also, for every \$200 each state received, one scholarship, tuition free, and open to free competition, shall be established.

The income on the one half of the "educational" fund devoted to public schools, together with the excess accruing from the College fund, after said college fund has reached the amount mentioned above, shall be apportioned to the several states according to the population; provided, that for the first five years it shall be apportioned on the basis of the number who cannot read and write, as reported in the preceding census of the United States.

Also, a sum not exceeding fifty per cent. of the last named fund, for the first year, and not more than ten per cent. thereafter, may be applied at the discretion of the legislature to the maintenance of Normal schools, to be used, after the first year, wholly for the payment of teachers. The income for the support of public schools

is to go on increasing until it reaches an amount equal to the income on one hundred million acres, at the net price of one dollar per acre.

A bill substantially the same as Mr. Morrill's was acted upon last year, but failed, through a blunder in the Senate. It has now been referred to the committee on "Education and Labor." In the meantime, communications have been addressed to the heads of the various agricultural colleges, seeking advice as to their success thus far, and to learn the opinion of these educators. We hope this bill will pass, as it has many good features. It will be another long stride in making our American School System, the strongest and most efficient ever conceived. The provisions for dividing, on the basis of illiteracy, for five years, is eminently just. This will lend a strong helping hand to the south, where it is most needed.

We think, however, that it should be apportioned on the basis of an annual school census, instead of the general census. Our western states are born and grow to millions within ten years!

EXAMINATIONS.

Examination day is fast approaching again, and students are looking forward to it as usual, with different emotions:

The diligent and earnest student with a feeling of confidence and pride in his heart, joyfully welcomes it. The sluggard and the shirk, with fear and trembling dreads it as an ordeal through which he dare not pass boldly and squarely, he feels that he must exercise his cunning and shirk through or suffer the just reward of his slothfulness and be "plucked."

There are several reasons why the present form of examinations is very desirable. The written examination precludes all inducements and temptations for "cramming."

It does not afford a chance for as much public display as the oral method, but accomplishes the ends sought for in examinations, viz: to test the thoroughness of the student's knowledge and his ability to express it. It is better, too, for several reasons; it is more just—all may be examined on the same list of questions, and be judged by the same standard; the student is allowed time for calm reflection that he may arrange his answers in a logical order, and express them in concise and appropriate language. Thus the student of unbounded impudence and effrontery and glib tongue, has not the advantage, frequently observed in examinations by the oral method, over his bashful, thick tongued, but far more diligent and ingenious classmate.

As we approach the coming examination, let us ask ourselves the question, "Have we been spending this term studying to pass examination, or have we been striving to make the idea of our text-books if right, so thoroughly a part of our own personal possessions, that examination is a matter of indifference, and really unnecessary?"

Let us keep in view the fact, that every new thought, or portion of knowledge gained is really a new accretion to the mind, making it broader and more nearly perfect; and that, when our college days are past, the stern battle of life will be one long examination day, with the relentless world as a board of examiners, where there will be no "cramming," shirking, or "trading questions" with another; but where we must "pass," or be "plucked" upon our own merits, or demerits.