

EDUCATIONAL COLUMN.

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Communications of Educational Topics, Reports of Educational Societies, etc., are respectfully solicited for the Educational Column, and may be addressed to Educational Committee, Box 24, Rock Bluffs, Nebraska.

THE ROCK BLUFFS SCHOOL.

The report of the Rock Bluffs School for the year ending June 30th, is, to say the least, highly encouraging. Two departments were organized at the beginning of the last school year, and a point of graduation established, which, owing to a very large number of scholars in the Primary Department, was subsequently changed. Those who can pass a satisfactory examination in Reading in the Fourth Reader and in Division in Arithmetic are admitted to the Higher Department.

The lack of an Intermediate Department causes considerable embarrassment in the classification in both departments. From the report made to the State Superintendent we copy a few statistics, which we trust may not be altogether uninteresting to the readers of the Educational department of the HERALD.

The whole number enrolled during the year in the Primary Department was 54 males and 47 females. The whole number enrolled in the Higher Department was 37 males and 35 females, making a total of 101 scholars in the Primary Department and 72 scholars in the Higher, or a grand total of 173 enrolled during the year, in both departments.

The number studying the different branches was as follows: Spelling, 162; reading, 149; writing, 61; arithmetic, 89; grammar, 41; geography, 44; history, 12; algebra, 12.

The number of enumerated children in the district by the last census was, males 94; females 86; or a total of 180. The number enrolled was, 91; males, and 83 females. The average daily attendance was, males, 38.78; females, 40.01; or a total of 79.79; and the average number of days each enrolled pupil attended school during the year was 134.2, or a little over six months out of the nine.

The number of square feet of black-board surface in the room of the Primary department is 132, and in the room of the Higher Department, 102, making a total of 234 square feet.

The Principal received \$60 per month, and one assistant \$40 per month.

The total number of days taught by all the teachers was 360, and the total wages paid were \$900. As an auxiliary to the school there was a class in Instrumental music composed of members of the school, and under the charge of Mrs. Bernard Drost, who gave lessons twice each week.

In addition we would add that the Fall term commenced on the 8th of September, with the same teachers, and already over eighty scholars have been enrolled. The Music department is still in the charge of Mrs. Drost, and the new school year begins with flattering prospects of continued and renewed success.

CHEAP TEACHING.

The question is very frequently asked here by the patrons of day-schools, Why have we not more teachers who are proficient in the business? Our reply has been invariably: You do not pay wages that will justify teachers of any ability in remaining with you.

It is generally the case that men are elected to the offices of directors or trustees of our schools who think they are doing the greatest amount of good, discharging their duties most fully, when they employ the man who will teach for the least money. They seem to look, not so much to the ability or attainments of the person as to the saving of a few dollars per month in wages; consequently our schools are very greatly injured by inefficient teachers. Those who have no just conceptions of the duties and responsibilities of the school-room, are, very frequently chosen as school officers.

In speaking of the ignorance of school directors as to what the attainments of a teacher should be, brings to mind the expression of school officers of an adjoining State. They talk a great deal about teachers holding good "certificates." We presume that if it were necessary for them to write the word they would begin it with an "S."

So long as we elect men of such inferior attainments to look after the interests of our schools; men who are concerned more about the saving of money than they are about the training of the immortal souls of their children, so long will the object for which the common schools are carried on be, to a great extent, defeated.

It has generally been our experience, that a "cheap coin" is a very dear one in the end. When those who are authorized to examine teachers and grant certificates shall become more rigid in their examinations; when we shall elect our officers from the most intelligent portion of our people—those who will look well to the best interests of our schools, and when our teachers are paid a fair and living compensation for their labors, then and not till then will our schools prove successful.

It is an indisputable fact that the grade of scholarship to entitle a teacher to hold a certificate should be much higher than it is at the present time. If applicants for schools in the West are as numerous as they are here, you can well afford to reject two out of every three, thus be likely to get good teachers.

In our township, where the wages paid to experienced teachers, have never been more than \$35 per month, the directors were generous (?) enough, to attempt to reduce this to \$30 per month. In speaking of this to an old teacher, who has been engaged in a school

remunerative field of labor, he suggested that the best thing that could be done would be to hang such a Board, and while we cannot fully acquiesce in that, we would advise you as your school system is probably yet in infancy that, should you have men of like principles in your State, it would be well for you to reiterate a late Statesman's words: Go farther West. The fact that our common schools are the basis for the future weal of our country must not be overlooked and ignored.

Whatever the views of our correspondent may be relative to the selection of school officers, we are inclined to believe, that it is not so much the incapacity of school boards as it is a lack of energy. Many school officers within our own knowledge, of inferior attainments are really more energetic in the cause of Education generally and locally, than many whom we have seen who were persons of superior attainments. But in order to perform the duties pertaining to school officers, we agree that at least some business qualifications are necessary, but one great qualification, superior in our judgment to every other is a constant and burning zeal in the cause of Education.

Without this qualification, school officers, of whatever attainments, will be to a great extent incompetent to discharge the duties pertaining to the respective offices. We feel justified in saying that all school boards are warranted in choosing those teachers who possess the best certificates, yet, the mere fact of holding a "good certificate" is no conclusive evidence that the holder thereof is a first class teacher. Indeed, we have observed that teachers holding an inferior grade of certificate, succeed quite as often as many who hold "first grade."

The teacher who depends alone upon his scholarship for his success in teaching will be very often disappointed; other things are quite as necessary as this.

What will become of it? Of the Northern Pacific Railroad we mean. Jay Cook & Co., are its nominal owners. Only \$300,000 worth of stock has been taken, and they control that. Some six hundred miles of road have been built, and they have reported that thirty millions have been sold. These bonds have built the road. But where is the money to build the remaining 1,200 miles to come from? And what is to pay the interest on the bonds already sold? It will require at the very least forty millions more to finish this road. There are no cities along its line to vote subsidies in aid of its construction. The 600 miles already built cannot pay running expenses, and will hardly yield a dividend until the millennium. The road runs, most of the way, through an unbroken wilderness, and much of the territory on either side is barren and inhospitable to the last degree. There is danger that the settlers, who have been lured there by the rose-colored descriptions of fertile soil and picturesque scenery and untold mineral deposits and a climate of unsurpassed salubrity, will perish from cold and starvation before the winter is out.

What is to become of this road, of which we have read so many splendid descriptions, and whose bonds were represented as more valuable than those of the Government until farmers and traders and widows and the trustees of orphaned children invested their small savings in them in preference to safer but less valued securities nearer home? Jay Cooke & Co. have practically failed, leaving two-thirds of the road unbuilt. The 600 miles already completed at an immense cost cannot possibly pay the interest on the twenty-five millions in bonds already placed somewhere and probably everywhere. It is a question whether this stretch of road would not bankrupt any company that should undertake to operate it for the next twenty-five years. The immense tract of public land—a region larger than Indiana and Illinois—which Congress voted away for the building of this road, is practically unavailable because it is not wanted for settlement, and probably will not have a market value for half a century. Certainly the bondholders, who have already been led to the fainting point and have nothing but worthless parchment to show for their investments of hard-earned money, are not likely to come forward and treble their subscriptions; the money they have already paid out is practically sunk. Messrs. Cooke & Co. cannot finish the road, if they try, without a further sale of bonds, which nobody will be foolish enough to buy. There would seem to be only one of two courses left—either the abandonment of the whole enterprise or its assumption by Government. But will the Government dare to assume such a burden? In the present state of public feeling, with the recollection of the Central Pacific frauds and Credit Mobilier scandals fresh in the public mind, will Congress be likely to venture into such a speculative scheme? Hardly. It would require unusual courage even to advocate the measure on the floor of the House. What remains, then but the abandonment of the whole enterprise? True, it would be pointed to as a national disgrace. But we have had so many national disgraces that we have got pretty well used to them; and if the sinking of twenty-five millions in a vain attempt to build a railroad through barrenness and desolation from nowhere to nowhere, for the accommodation of a population that does not exist, will have the salutary effect of curing our people of that species of folly and making all similar schemes forever impossible, we are not sure but it will be a wise permanent investment.—Graphic.

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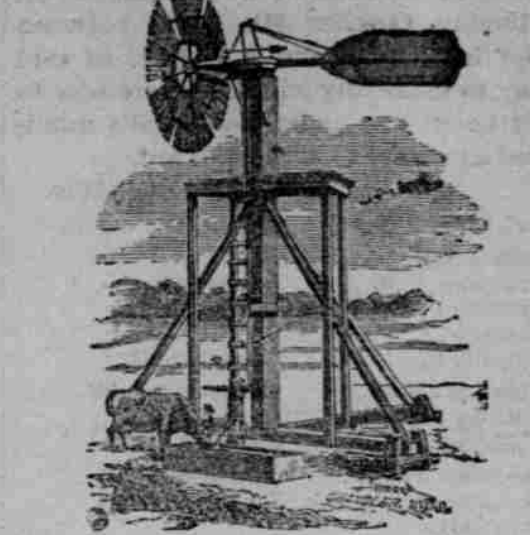
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