

## THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Editor Conservative:

The Conservative of November 28, strikes at the very root of many of the evils existing today, when it discusses the public school system in such a masterly manner. We look to the rising generation for our nation's perpetuation; a strong and perfect system of education can correct many evils, while a weak and fad-ridden system, lacking the technique of experience and skill, will over-ride the good we may expect to accrue from the influence of home, pulpit and rostrum.

When widely read journals take up this great question, we may look for results; but so long as the purely educational publications alone discuss it, the question follows a circle, every member of which knows the truth, but is powerless to remedy the defect.

If cause and effect may be studied for a solution of the great questions of science and politics, why not apply a little of the same remedy to the solution of the public school question?

Like causes produce like effects, whether the subject be science, politics, or the public school system. That our school system is not perfect is admitted by every one; our present system is excelled by few ever tried on this revolving cylinder, however, but we may improve the present system in many of its details by a careful study of cause and effect.

If a manufacturer should apply the same tactics to a business proposition that the present system of public education applies to the public school system, his financial standing could not long be maintained. The life of a public school teacher (as an instructor) is about three years! Now, if a manufacturer should change his whole operating force, from master mechanic down, once every three years and always take on a set of untried workmen, he surely could not long compete in the markets of the world. Then, if all the force of his great factory should play "stage coach" once a year and his painter should get the place of his blacksmith, his driver get the place of his bookkeeper, and his book-keeper get the place of his hostler, the situation would become so ridiculous that Bradstreet would decline giving him a financial or business rating.

But this is the condition that exists in the school system; there is a game of "stage coach" played, not only in the teaching force, but in the controlling force as well. We see the same effect produced by a like cause, in our national government; once every four years comes the business stagnation, until election is over; so, once a year, in our schools, there is a break in the

momentum of educational interests and one third of the experience is replaced by inexperience. This effect is far worse than the quadrennial game of "stage coach" played by the government as the whole force of school management is in the game.

The momentum of a falling body is equal to the *square of the time* multiplied by the distance it falls in one unit of time. If a teacher or school officer produces one good point in one year (or units of time), why should he not accomplish four points in two years, nine points in three years, sixteen points in four years and so on to the limit of his capacity? Of course this momentum would be governed by the amount of *friction* to be overcome in the *medium* through which the body falls.

This same law is applied in the business world until we find employees so valuable to their employers that their salary equals the compensation of the president of the United States.

The only solution for all the vexing questions arising from the defects of our school system seems to me is found in this:

Raise the standard and give a reasonable assurance of tenure, that the avocation of teaching may become an established vocation. Every other calling, worthy of the name, has by one means or another a tenure of office. The doctor, the lawyer, the preacher, may not be deposed and denied the right to practice his profession by one irresponsible man. If one community be denied him, there is always a force at his command to establish him in another field; not so the teacher—he must risk his only means of support upon the caprice of one man who is often illy qualified to pass judgment on his powers to instruct, and who considers not these powers but other points not germane to the question.

You have the cause before you which produces nine-tenths of the evil effects of the present school system.

A solution of the proposition is not easy; the American people guard very jealously the elective power (and they should). The teacher will not work it out for himself—"the game is not worth the candle," other callings will entice him and he will seek a more stable footing in the community in which he hopes to become more than a mere transient.

It is well that our influential journals are taking up this question as it is vital to the life of our nation. We must make teaching a profession wherein the best talent can find a comfortable living, an assurance of tenure and a permanent place in the community where his influence will be felt, or God pity the coming fad-ridden, over-worked, incompetent generations.

E. E. BLACKMAN.

Roca, Neb., Dec. 5, 1901.

## EVIDENCE.

Morton's Conservative is uneasy because idiocy in Nebraska is on the increase. One reason assigned for this increase is that so many half-witted people get married. There never was a good without an evil. Marriage is essential to happiness and the silly marry the same as the wise. If idiocy is increasing it is a sad thing to think about so here goes for something else.—Hastings Tribune.

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