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convictions, followed by action, and that any person not filling this description to the full, is unfit for Superintendent of Common Schools. The proposition is too plain that one not possessing such qualifications, having no settled public convictions or ideas of duty to the public, or too timid, or cowardly, or crafty to express them, is unfit for any public position. It is also plain that a man who is not thoroughly learned in the ways of government, as well in practice as in theory, is not qualified for an administrative position that involves the interests not only of nearly all our adult people, but of all the rising generation. And it is equally clear that, technically, such man must be a politician or statesman. Then why all this parade about excluding politics from the superintendency?

No board to perform executive duty was ever successful in this or any other country. No one member can have his own way, and their action is always the result of compromise. Therefore no one of them feels responsibility for what is done; nor can any one of them be justly held to it, his colleagues more or less controlling his judgment. Instead of any bold, progressive man being appointed by such a board, especially upon the basis of their own appointment, a flat, insipid, opinionless, timid time-server would be sure to succeed invariably.

A man thus appointed would feel no responsibility—there would be nobody to whom to be responsible. If he pleased one, he would probably displease all the rest, and to avoid that, he would do as little of anything as possible, always being able to excuse himself to any member of the board by pointing to some other who was opposed to what was proposed to be done.

VALUE OF SCHOOL INSPECTION.

AS Pennsylvania will elect a new corps of superintendents in her counties, cities and boroughs, on the second Tuesday in May next, we make below some quotations from high authorities concerning the value of an intelligent and systematic inspection of schools, hoping thereby to induce directors to bring into the work in this State, the very best talent at their command. We find most of these quotations ready made to our hand in the able "Education Report" of Ontario, for 1870, by the Chief Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Ryerson.

Dr. Ryerson himself says: "In all educational countries, the *thorough inspection* of schools is regarded as *essential* to their efficiency and improvement; and this cannot be done except by men who are competent to *teach* the schools themselves."

Dr. Fraser, the present Bishop of Manchester, who, in 1865, visited the United States for the purpose of studying our school systems, and who wrote an able report upon them, says, that "inspection is the salt of elementary education." He adds: "In fact, the great desideratum of

the common school system, both in Massachusetts and generally in the States, is *adequate, thorough, impartial, independent* inspection of schools."

"My observation" says the agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education, "in visiting thousands of schools throughout Massachusetts, and many in twelve other States, have clearly proved to my mind the wisdom of maintaining a superintendent in all our cities and large townships, who shall devote his whole time to the care and improvement of schools."

Hon. T. Best, an enlightened English gentleman, says: "The schools under government inspection are as a rule the only good schools in the country."

The report of the English Commissioners in 1868 contains the following: "In this country inspection has been the most powerful instrument in the improvement of elementary education. Inspection is necessary to prevent waste, to secure efficiency, to prepare the way for improvement."

The traveling agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education uses the following forcible language in regard to the matter: "It has been said, and with great truthfulness, that the most important branch of administration, as connected with education, relates to school inspection. It is asserted by some careful observers that the Dutch school-masters are decidedly superior to the Prussian, notwithstanding the numerous normal schools of Prussia and the two or three only in Holland; and this superiority is attributed entirely to a better system of inspection. This is the basis on which the whole fabric of their popular instruction rests. The absence of such a thorough supervision of schools as is maintained in Holland with such admirable results is the weakest part of our system.

"What is needed for all our schools, and what is essential to their highest efficiency, is a constant, thorough, intelligent, impartial and independent supervision. Comparatively few persons possess the varied qualifications so indispensable to success in this delicate and important work. So important was it regarded by the distinguished author of the Dutch system of inspection, that, after a long life devoted to educational labor, he said: 'Take care how you choose your inspectors; they are the men whom you ought to look for, lantern in hand.'

"A school" says Everett, "is not a clock which you can wind up, and then leave it to go of itself. Nor can other interests be

thus neglected. Our railroads and factories require some directing, controlling and constantly supervising mind for their highest efficiency, and do not our schools need the same? To meet this great want, eleven of the fifteen cities of our State, and numerous large towns, have availed themselves of the provision of the statute, and elected school superintendents who devote their whole time and energies to this work of supervision. I have visited all, or nearly all, these towns and cities, and several of them frequently, and can bear my decided testimony to the great benefit that has resulted to their schools in consequence."

A distinguished educator remarks: "Every man who has to do with schools, ought to make himself master of the best modes of conducting them in all the details of arrangement, instruction and discipline. A man commits a wrong against teachers, against children and against the interests of school education, who seeks the office of inspector without being qualified and able to fulfill all its functions."

"The importance of the question of public school inspection," remarks the *English Journal of Education*, "is much broader and deeper than at first sight appears. The history of that laborious transition which has occurred, first, from contented ignorance to discontent with ignorance, and then to strivings after intelligence, and attempts at education, fruitifying in a very general effort to make schools efficient, discloses to the practical observer, one gangrenous obstacle attaching to the whole progress of the movement, viz., a morbid desire to screen and palliate defects. We believe far less hindrance to education has arisen from the badness of schools, than from the folly of cloaking their badness. This jealousy of criticism has been exhibited greatly in proportion to the reputation of the school. It has always been found that an inspector may, with much less chance of evoking the wrath of the managers, denounce a bad school in wholesale terms than he can insinuate a blemish, or hint, a blot, in one which "has a name." It may be said that this is very natural, as no one likes the criticism of that which has obtained him credit, and ministered to his *amour propre*: but natural as this may be, it is not the less injurious to the progress of education. The very best school is capable of improvement; and as the real value of a school is generally over-rated, and its defects are more easily veiled than those of any other object of equal importance, it is greatly to be lamented that this intolerance of criticism should pit itself against the obvious means of improvement which skilled inspection affords. We repeat, that if it stops short of a full and faithful exposure of every fault and defect in the matter and methods of instruction, it betrays its trust, and falls short of imperative duty. So far from there being ground for complaint of the censoriousness of inspectors of schools, whether local or governmental, proofs abound that they far oftener sin in being too mealy-mouthed, and winking at defects they deem it ungracious or impolitic to expose. Education is by no means in need of such delicate handling. It is

far from being a flame easily extinguished by the breath of censorship. On the contrary, nothing tends more directly to feed and nourish it; and inspectors who have the manliness to set their faces against shams and rote systems, and to "develop" errors, as well as "aims," in their right light, are deserving of the hearty thanks and support of every man who wishes education to be a reality, and a thorough mind-training in the duties and subjects essential for practical life. There are two ways of inspecting schools; one is to praise the teachers and please the managers; the other is to benefit the scholars and improve the schools. It will but seldom happen that those two courses can coincide. The inspector must usually take his choice between them, and according to it is he worthy or unworthy of his office. We are no advocates of undue harshness, or a spirit of fault finding. He who takes pleasure in blaming, or who fails to apply just censure in kindly or Christian terms, is just as wrong as he who, from false lenience or truckling servility, praises where he ought to blame, or 'winks at faults he trembles to chastise.'"

"We firmly believe that the progress of sound teaching is just now more entirely in the hands, and contingent on the faithfulness and courage of inspectors of schools, than any other human agency. None, so well as professional and experienced examiners, can detect glosses, extinguish effete systems, substitute right ones, or invert the pyramid now tottering on its apex. Those who, chafing under the wholesome correction of their own schools, absorbed by the sense of personal grievance, and forgetting what is due to the great behests and eternal aims of education, rail at the remedy, and attack the physician instead of the disease, are the real obstructives to the cause of sound secular and availing religious instruction."

EDUCATION BILL IN CONGRESS.

THE bill providing for the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the several States and Territories for educational purposes, which passed the House of Representatives at Washington, February 8th, has not been acted upon in the Senate. The bill is not in all respects what we would desire it to be, but if it cannot be improved, we would like to see it pass in its present shape.

It does not interfere with the right to manage their own school affairs, which has always been held to belong to the several States, and which it would be unwise to take out of their hands. "The bill simply requires as a condition of receiving the national bounty, that each State or Territory shall provide by its own local laws for the free education of all its children between the ages of six and sixteen; that it will apply to this purpose all moneys received by the operations of the act; and that it will report annually the condition of its schools."

A narrow selfishness would find fault with