

THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

BY R. B. HASSELL.

Two years ago the MINER printed very neatly and satisfactorily to the Board of Trustees a brief "course of study" which they had laid down for the Public Schools of Butte. It outlined quite clearly a system of grading which, it was thought, would furnish the basis for efficient work in our schools while our city remained in its infancy as well as when it should attain to metropolitan proportions. Although the course was scattered through the town at the time of publication and afterward sent to all who inquired about our schools, its existence is not known to the many strangers in our midst.

In consequence it is thought best to publish the amplified form of the original course of study. It will be found in the semi-weekly MINER for January 4th. It has been changed only to make it conform to the new series of text books adopted by the territory and present such additional instructions to the teachers employed to carry it out as the special work of the ensuing year requires.

From a careful examination of the "course" it will appear that the Trustees, with the help of the Principal, arranged it after the most approved forms of the country and those which personal experience had declared most practical. It divides the pupils below the High School into two departments: a Primary and an Intermediate or a Grammar Department. Each of these departments is again divided into four grades and each grade into two classes. To each class is assigned half a school year for the completion of its work and eight years is allotted to the whole course. Each grade is numbered, beginning with the lowest primary grade as number one. Letters are used to distinguish the two classes of each grade. The A class is the highest class. When a school session is nine months or more in length promotions take place every half year.

While the number of pupils in these two departments limited the rooms and teachers to four or five, it was necessary to burden each teacher with more than one grade. As a consequence the work done was neither as thorough nor as rapid as at present. Our schools were the village schools. They contained the germ of all that was to follow, but lack of time and facilities in the school room always placed our schools at a disadvantage when compared with city schools. The system was there, the knowledge, the disposition to work and progress; but, notwithstanding everything was done to make the whole bend to the conditions of circumscribed school rooms rather than to the maintenance of an inflexible plan, the best work could not be done.

Cities always have advantages over small towns, and not the least of them are of an educational nature. We claim a population of about 8,000 souls with 1119 children and youth that draw school money. We certainly have a right to enjoy some extra benefits in schooling and it is fortunate if the untoward events attendant upon the effort to enlarge our old school building have led our people to look for these things. Instead of a handful of voters present at a school election, shall we not have a thousand hereafter? Will not visits to and inquiries about the schools become more frequent?

No new system can give us the benefits we look for, because there is none. Some cities, it is true, provide for ten grades and a course of ten years' study in the elementary schools instead of the eight adopted by our former board of trustees. But the question involved in the two slightly differing systems is one upon which educators, perhaps, are best able to judge, and the preponderance of opinion among them is in favor of the eight years' course as most likely to meet the needs of the average American child. When we have the means at our command, we may see fit to follow the example of St. Louis and supplement our system by kindergarten schools for infant classes and an extended course of higher instruction. At present our system is commensurate with our ability to support it, and complete as far as it goes. What we do want is an expansion of facilities, and this, population and money afford us.

We open school this year with the full complement of teachers necessary when a room is provided for every grade in the system, besides supporting a primary

school in Walkerville, Travona and at the Silver Bow mill.

When we say that our population drawing school money is 1119, we mislead the opinion that will be formed regarding our ability to fill rooms and sustain grades, unless we make an explanation. Last year the census returns gave 752 drawing public school money but only 426 of them had presented themselves for enrollment in the schools at that time. This was but 57 per cent. The number increased gradually until at the close of the year it had reached 533 or 73 per cent. of the whole; but it must be remembered that during the period of this increase immigration was constantly adding to the number of our families. No special disgrace attaches to the school, because, in November of the school year, 43 per cent. were not enrolled. The census rolls show that the delinquents belonged principally to the class of young men and women, so large in our community, who are just under age, and to Chinamen, provided for under the Territorial law, but not expected to attend. Children between four and five years old materially swell the number. Five years is the legal school age, but at four years the child begins to draw money for the benefit of the district. In making an estimate for the present year, school not being in session, we take as a basis the per centage of attendance upon school on the first of December of last year, the time when the census returns are completed. We do this more securely because two years ago the attendance at that time in the year was also about 57 per cent., lacking only six hundredths per cent. of it. Now 57 per cent. on 1119 will give an enrollment of 638. Taking out a probable enrollment of 120 for the three outside primary schools leaves 508 to be accommodated in the Butte schools proper. This number for the present can be nicely provided for in the rooms that have been rented in the Caplice and two outside rooms.

The number also constitutes a very good equipment for one graded school. The increase that will come month by month will need a special provision. As has been the case the special growth will probably be in the first primary grade. In that case, a primary room must be obtained, if possible, in the east part of town and constitute the nucleus of another graded school as complete in all its appointments as the present one is to be.

By the opening of the school session in September, 1882, if the increase of the year is only proportionate to that of the two years past, we shall have 957 pupils and 837 of them will belong to the town of Butte itself. Such an estimate signifies over 2,000 children in the district and 1,600 of them drawing school money. With 837 pupils we shall be able to fill two large buildings with the requisite number of grades to satisfy our system of grading and support a strong high school. A primary school for Centreville and a supplementary primary room for each graded school would undoubtedly provide for all the increase of the session.

The trustees of the district, for more than twelve months, have been looking forward to the season of 1882 as the one that would test the generosity and wisdom of our people. They knew that the satisfactory completion of the present school building would only answer for the necessities which a short sighted legislature failed to enable us to provide against three years ago, and that a new building must go up almost immediately after the completion of the present one. If the people of the district vote to sell the present property and appropriate the proceeds to the erection of other buildings, the trustees will undoubtedly take the best professional counsel at hand and push the work to a speedy completion.

Personally, the writer considers the sale of the property eminently desirable in order to release it from the impending embarrassment of litigation and enable the district to erect the two buildings, already alluded to, without waiting for tardy legislation and the issuance of bonds. At the time of letting the contract for the attempted addition we were opposed to a sale, first, because no available ground could be had for any reasonable figure; second, because no nicer plot of ground can be found in this district; third, because it seemed almost certain that we should be cursed with a distant, outside location—the first cause of all that factional strife that weakens

the educational work in two-thirds of the cities of the United States. It is not economy but parsimony to sell school property in any community, because a large sum of money can be raised thereby. To many of our citizens, under the present circumstances, the question of the sale of the property presents itself as "Holson's choice."

If we understand the mind of our people aright, the only question that troubles is in regard to the character and number of the buildings that should be erected, provided a sale is made. There has been talk of as many as five different buildings to be scattered through the town. Either the parties who talked of such a project have not made themselves clearly understood or else they labor under a misunderstanding regarding the requirements of our school. Perhaps a plain statement of the decision made upon the question by the country at large will have more weight than anything else that could be said. In the first place, it will be found on consultation with anyone who has posted himself upon the history and present status of education in the U. S. that the custom of the country pronounces without a single dissenting voice, as far as the writer knows, in favor of the establishment of one complete graded school system within so much of the area of every city as will afford pupils enough to give the system scope for thorough work, and as many similar systems as there are such areas within the limits of the city. In other words, the country recognizes the desirability of a system, and the system naturally prescribes the territory and population necessary to support it. From 450 to 600 children equips the system for work, the merit of which depends wholly upon the management.

Such being the universal and practically accepted opinion of our people, we have only further to inquire into the plans followed in supplying the areas mentioned with rooms for the accommodation of the pupils. There are two such. One finds place in some of the wards of Boston and some western cities. It provides for the erection of small buildings on limited plats of ground in different parts of the ward. Each building is devoted exclusively to certain grades. Promotion takes place from one grade to another just as if they were in one building. The only advantage of the plan lies in avoiding the congregation of large numbers of children together. Children in small groups can be kept more directly under the eye of the teacher, are more tractable and less liable to form pernicious habits.

The second plan, more generally adopted, calls for the erection of one large building that shall contain from nine to eleven rooms upon as large a plat of ground as can be obtained for the purpose. The plan has great advantages or it would not be followed in nearly all the large cities of the country. The primary and intermediate departments have recess at different hours, thus gaining some of the especial merit claimed by the advocates of the first plan. As all the rooms are in one building it brings them under the immediate and beneficial influence of a principal teacher or superintendent, and, in this way, secures better government and closer application to work on the part of both teachers and pupils. Again, a superintendent's work of inspection and suggestion can be much more extensive and thorough. One superintendent, it is claimed, under this plan can accomplish the work of two under the first mentioned. There is no space for comments, and perhaps they are unnecessary.

The people can rest assured that any expression of opinion upon the subject by any interested citizen of the place, will receive the consideration it deserves at the hands of the Trustees.

MISS CLARE LINCOLN, MUSICAL INSTRUCTOR AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.—Miss Lincoln gives both vocal and instrumental instructions at reasonable rates. She is agent for the best manufactured Pianos and Organs, which are sold by her at eastern prices. Miss Lincoln has gained an enviable reputation for being a superior musical instructor, being a graduate of some of the best musical schools in the country.

Walkerville Business Directory.

- BOARDING HOUSES.
 Sperry & Kramlich, Eugene Sullivan,
 Mrs. Stack, John H. King.
 BARBER SHOP.—G. Green.
 DRUG STORE.—Botkin, Paxson & Co.
 SALOONS.
 John Cadigan, Jeff McNamee,
 Cameron & Wessell, Hugh Twobig,
 Carey & Carey, John Sweeney.
 SHOEMAKERS.
 Frank Vomplair, Ed. Quinn.
 STORES.
 D. Driscoll, J. A. Broughton & Co.,
 Foster & Murphy, Manning & McMillin,
 Coleman & Co., Chas. Schlessinger.

During the year 1881, 22,826,670 pounds of freight were shipped to Butte and vicinity via the U. & N. Railway.

A bunch-grass-fed steer weighing 1,390 pounds net was one of the attractions at the Eureka meat market on West Broadway, Butte, during the Holidays. It was slaughtered by Bielenberg & Falligan.

Marchesseau & Valiton are among the heaviest wholesale and retail dealers in groceries in Butte. This firm keeps nothing but superior goods in their line, and their reputation for fair dealing places them in the front rank of business houses in Montana. A cut of their fine building appears in this edition.

RICHARDS & GRIX—BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS.—This firm opened their business some time last summer on Broadway, one door west of the MINER office, a cut of their building appearing in this issue. They are the only firm in the city that makes a specialty of the stationery business. Their stock in this particular consists of everything that can possibly be found in the stationery line in any stationery store west of Chicago. Their stock of school books, the series adopted by the last legislature for our public schools, is large and complete. Messrs. Richards & Grix are the sole agents in this city for the Mason & Hamlin organs and the celebrated Hardman pianos, and assure the public that they can purchase these instruments as cheap as they can be had by ordering them direct from the manufacturers. They also keep a full line of musical instruments and make a specialty of sheet music. Draughtsmen's material of all kinds is also kept in stock. Their news department is always stocked with all the leading journals and literary productions published in the United States and sold at publisher's prices. They also keep a fine line of cutlery. The advantage of dealing with this firm lies in the fact that if they do not have in stock any piece of music, periodicals, books or anything in the stationery line they will order it for you and have it here on the shortest possible notice. Mr. Grix having had years of experience in this business knows where and whom to order from and you can always rest assured your orders will be satisfactorily filled.

SCHMIDT & GAMER.—CENTENNIAL BREWERY.—This is the oldest established brewery in the city. Mr. Schmidt makes his headquarters at the brewery, about a mile below Butte, and Mr. Gamer has charge of the saloon in Butte. This firm recently moved into their elegant two-story brick on Main street. It makes one of the most elegant bar-rooms in the city. The bar and fixtures are certainly the most elegant in the city. The counter and fixture stand are of the brightest black walnut while the stand is ornamented with one of the most handsome looking glasses in the city. The counter is something altogether different from what we have ever seen in the Territory and the cost of it must have been immense. The best of goods only are sold by this house. The cigars, whiskeys, wines, brandies, &c. are purchased from the best houses. The beer they manufacture is conceded by all to be the best in the territory. They employ a brewer who thoroughly understands his business, who keeps everything in splendid shape and has all the latest and best methods for making the delicious beverage. This house also manufactures during the summer season the best ginger ale, soda and sarsaparilla to be had in this market. Their delivery wagon makes regular trips every day and delivers all orders as promptly as possible.

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Walnut Poles and Cornices in the city,

at Lowest Price, at E. L. BONNER

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