

Virginia City Territorial Enterprise
April, 1863

Examination of Teachers

A grand examination of candidates for positions as teachers in our public schools was had yesterday in one of the rooms of the Public School in this city. Some twenty-eight candidates were present—twenty-three of whom were ladies and five gentlemen. We do the candidates but simple justice when we say that we have never seen more intelligent faces in a crowd of the size.

The following gentlemen constituted the Board of Examiners: Dr. Geiger, Mr. J. W. Whicher and John A. Collins. We observed that Messrs. Feusier, Adkison and Robinson of the Board of Trustees were also present yesterday. Printed questions are given to each of the candidates, the answers to which are written out and handed in with the signature of the applicant appended. These are all examined in private by the Board, and those who have best acquitted themselves are selected as teachers. In all, we believe, about twelve teachers are to be chosen.

Upon each of the following subjects a great number of questions are to be answered: general questions, methods of teaching, object teaching; spelling, reading, writing, defining, arithmetic, grammar, geography, natural philosophy, history of the United States, physiology and hygiene, chemistry, algebra, geometry, natural history, astronomy—in all, eighteen subjects, with about as many questions upon each. Yesterday they had got as far as the ninth subject, grammar, at the time of our visit, and we presume have got but little further. Today the examination will be resumed.

If there is anything that terrifies us it is an examination. We don't even like an examination in a Police Court. In vain we looked from face to face yesterday through the whole list of candidates for signs of fright or trepidation. All appeared perfectly at ease, though quite in earnest. We took a look at some of the questions and were made very miserable by barely glancing them over. We became much afraid that some member of the Board would suddenly turn upon us and require us on pain of death or a long imprisonment, to answer some of the questions.

Under the head of "Object Teaching," we found some ten questions—some of them, like a wheel within a wheel, containing ten questions in one. We barely glanced at the list, reading here and there a question, when we felt great beads of perspiration starting out upon our brow—our massive intellect oozing out. Happening to read a question like this, "Name four of the faculties of children that are earliest developed," we at once became anxious to get out of the room. We expected each moment that one of the Board would seize us by the collar and ask, "Why is it?" or something of the kind, and we wanted to leave—thought we would feel better in the open air.

When the answers of all the candidates are opened and read we will try to be on hand; we are anxious for information on those "four faculties." We think the above a good deal like the conundrum about the young man who "went to the Sandwich Islands; learned the language of the Kanakas, came home, got married, got drunk, went crazy, was sent to Stockton—Why is it?"

Then under the same head we noticed ten questions about mining for silver ores and ten more about the reduction of silver ores. Why these twenty-three "school marms" are expected to be posted on amalgamating processes, is more than we can guess. As this is a mining country, we presume it is necessary for a lady to give satisfactory answers to such questions as the following, before being entrusted with the education of our little Washoeites: "What is your opinion of the one-ledge theory? Have you seen the Ophir horse? Have you conscientious scruples as to black dyke? Are you committed to the sage-brush process? Give your opinion on vein matter, and state your reasons for thinking so; and tell wherein you differ with those who do not agree with you."