

#98-39
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THE GREENE SCENE

By Senator Leroy F. Greene

A JOB OFFERING

The Sierra County Board of Education met in Downieville, California over 100 years ago on Tuesday, June the 9th, 1896, to question applicants for teacher's certificates and graduating diplomas.

These are some of the questions that were on that examination:

The sum of two numbers is 7.5 and their difference is 2.25. What are the numbers?

"A" can do a piece of work in 10 days and "B" in 16 days. "A" works four days and is then assisted by "B". How long will it take both of them to complete it?

What events are called to mind by the following dates: 1497, 1520, 1607, 1620, 1789, 1820, 1845, 1863, 1876?

Name three battles of the Civil War in which the Union soldiers were victorious, and two in which they were defeated.

Give the normal temperature, pulsation and respiration.

In the case of paralysis of one side of the body, why is the opposite side of the face affected?

Have you any plan for preventing whispering? If so, what is it?

Name and illustrate the meaning of five English, five Latin, and five Greek prefixes or suffixes.

I believe my score on such a test that includes these and other unbelievable questions would be somewhere at approximately the zero

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level. This test was given June 9, 1896. It seems to me that about that time the education requirements to become teachers were no more than high school graduation. I believe in the first quarter of this century, we included Normal School graduation which was the equivalent of two years of community college. Today's teachers have two degrees and five years minimum of college level work before they can be certificated.

Ours is a world of ever increasing complexity. Nuclear energy, radio, television, plastics, satellites did not exist. No computers, no air travel, no mechanical refrigeration, no supermarket check-out stands with gadgets to read prices electronically. Less than one or two percent of today's inventions existed.

We have seen almost unimaginable advances in the technical world in which we live. But look back at what you were supposed to know to become a teacher in 1896.

I would be lost to answer the question regarding a brief history of the founding and settlement of New York, Georgia and Connecticut. I doubt that many people who lived in Sierra county in 1896 ever had the opportunity to visit New York, Georgia, and Connecticut. While I have visited all three and am familiar with them, there is no way in the world I could give you a brief history of their founding.

I have had the occasional experience of looking at very old school textbooks, and I have never seen one that did not contain material that was new to me.

Would you care to guess how much the successful candidate would have been paid? It would have been far below today's poverty line or minimum wage.

end.