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Note: The Illinois law requiring the examination of school teachers

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of school teachers as to their qualifications, and providing for the granting of official certificates of authority to teach, had its origin with Lincoln. In the pioneer days, any person whom circumstances forced into the business was permitted to teach. On Dec. 2, 1840, Lincoln offered the following resolution in the Illinois House of Representatives:

"Resolved, That the Committee on Education be instructed to enquire into the expediency of providing by law for the examination as to the qualification of persons offering themselves as school teachers, that no teacher shall receive any part of the public school fund who shall not have successfully passed such examination, and that they report by bill or otherwise."

A motion to table this resolution was defeated—yeas 40, nays 40. Within the ensuing three months the legislature passed the "an act making provision for organizing and maintaining common schools"—the act which was the foundation of the common school system of Illinois.

Section 31 of this act, providing for the qualification of teachers, embodied Lincoln's idea. This section made it the duty of the school trustees in every township "to examine any person proposing to teach school in their vicinity in relation to the qualifications of such person as a teacher," or they might appoint a board of commissioners
to conduct the examination; and a certificate of qualifications was to be issued by a majority of the trustees or commissioners. Since then, of course, all the states have passed laws providing for the examination of teachers. In Illinois, no material change has been made in Lincoln's plan (for this section of the law was very likely drawn by Lincoln), except that the power of examination has been transferred from the trustees or commissioners to the County Superintendent of Schools—an office then unknown.