

The Teachers' Institute of Annapolis and Digby.

The annual meeting of the Teachers' Institute for District No. 4 (Annapolis and Digby Counties) was held in the old and beautiful town of Annapolis Royal on the 19th and 20th of May. The attendance was large, and included several teachers, who came by rail from Yarmouth and Lunenburg. As usual at teachers' meetings, the most progressive and advanced teachers were largely represented. From one extreme came Principal Morton and Miss Crousse of Bridgewater, and Principal Shaffner and Miss Keddy from Mahone Bay; from the other, Principal Starratt and Miss Archibald of Yarmouth. There were, besides Principal Hogg and Miss Redding of Digby, Principal Brown and Miss Vidito of Bridgetown, Principal Longley of Paradise, Principal Goucher and Miss Reagh of Middleton, Principal Shields of Bear River, Principal Faulkner, Miss A. M. Parker and Miss Fash of Granville, and nearly a hundred others.

The discussions did not amount to much—perhaps, partly, because all the papers read were so orthodox, conclusive and well-written as to leave no room for criticism or for difference of opinion.

Mr. Messenger's paper on "Practical Education" was a strong plea for that training which enables a man to make the most of himself—not for himself alone, but for society, for time, and for eternity, in contradistinction to that so-called practical education which looks no higher than mere money-making. The aim of education should be a broad, generous culture and the securing of self-perpetuating habits that will make life itself both school and teacher after graduation from the common school.

Miss Mabelle Fash endeavored to answer the question "Should Corporal Punishment in our Schools be Abolished?" The teacher's work decides to a large degree the welfare of all her scholars. This vitally important work requires, as a condition of success, obedience and respect on the part of the pupils. Fortunately, the majority of them are amenable to reason and kindness, but occasionally one turns up who is wholly unaffected by moral suasion in any form. Where there are no parental schools expulsion would be the greatest cruelty, a judicious use of the strap the greatest kindness.

We have free schools and compulsory attendance laws in order that society may be protected from the ignorance and almost consequent viciousness of children to whom school restraints are peculiarly irksome. If we fail to manage that element, then free schools are a failure, and the taxpayer does not get what he pays for. If the wholesome fear of corporal punishment were to be removed, many children who now develop habits of

obedience would gradually fall into the ranks of the incorrigible. The power of corporal punishment is less likely to be abused by the intelligent teacher, under the restraint of public opinion, than by the ignorant, almost irresponsible parent. The consensus of the best thought of all ages and all countries is that if you spare the rod you spoil the child.

In the evening there was a very large gathering in the Academy of Music to hear the Hon. Dr. J. W. Longley. He was introduced by Inspector Morse, who referred to the great advance in our higher education, due to Dr. Allison, and in practical science teaching, due to Dr. A. H. MacKay.

Dr. Longley was delighted to see such a large audience—showing an interest in education, an inspiration to himself and to the Institute. He would have teachers' salaries increased, but the government was now giving \$240,000 a year to education, and it could do no more. The people would have to do the rest, and no doubt they would, if teachers kept steadily improving their professional standing. Except in technical education, Nova Scotia stood as high as any country in the world. Our system is, however, defective in the practical and in the spiritual. It seems designed for the five per cent. who go in for higher education, while it leaves the masses unfitted for life's work. He referred to the efforts being made by the Hon. G. W. Ross of Ontario to introduce manual and industrial teaching so that when pupils leave school they should be immediately useful. Our curriculum does not sufficiently foster character-building as the highest aim of the educator. Religion, in the sense of sectarianism in narrow formulas, cannot be taught in the public schools, but religion, as represented in high-toned morality, honesty, self-control, temperance, courtesy, toleration and unselfishness should be the ground-work of education. But these high qualities are not sufficiently thought of and cared for in the teaching of the three R's. The school law provides for this higher education. It is possible to make good laws, but it is much more important to have the law honestly carried out. And in this case it is for the teachers to manifest that altruism that labors for the highest good, that love and sympathy for children that constrains them to be sacrificed, if need be, in their interests.

Prof. Haley followed. The field of knowledge is unlimited; the child's capacity is limited. It is therefore difficult to construct a curriculum suited to those who look upon the acquisition of knowledge as the all-important thing in education. But if we look upon the acquisition of capacity to do and to think and the formation of character as that which characterizes true