

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN :

I have chosen as the subject of my address, the Act recently passed regarding Public and High Schools, with the regulations made, under the Act, by the Council of Public Instruction.

The fifth clause of the Act provides that "in each County or union of Counties there shall be one or more school officers, to be called County Inspectors, who shall have charge of not more than one hundred and twenty, nor less than fifty schools each." Under the law, as it formerly stood, it was competent for County Councils to appoint County Inspectors; but only in a few cases was the power to make such appointments exercised: and the consequence was, that the inspection bestowed on the Common Schools was less satisfactory than might have been desired. Of the Local Superintendents, who are henceforth to be known in our schools no more, it is not at all necessary to speak harshly. A considerable number of them performed their duties with ability and zeal; and, as a class, they were serviceable to the cause of education; but—as King Arthur said, when he lay bleeding of his mortal wound, "I have done my work"—they have done their work. The impression throughout the country was universal, that it was time for the old order to change, and to give place to something more adapted to the stage of educational development at which we have arrived; and hence the clause of the Act, which abolishes the system of inspection by Local Superintendents, and renders the appointment of County Inspectors imperative, has met with no serious opposition from any quarter.

The duty of prescribing the qualifications of County Inspectors is laid on the Council of Public Instruction. The Council has resolved to grant certificates of qualification to graduates of a British or Colonial University, who have taught in a school for three years, and to first-class Public School teachers of the highest grade. I do not mention, as a separate class, High School Masters who have taught in a school for three years, for a degree is henceforth to be made the qualification for the Mastership of a High School.

Each graduate, before receiving a certificate, must write a Thesis on school organization, to be submitted to the Examining Committee of the Council. It appears from the public papers, that the dignity of some graduates has been hurt by this regulation; but I do not feel that there is a shadow of a ground for the offence that has been taken. For, in the first place, an ordinary University degree is not the most satisfactory guarantee possible that the holder possesses even the literary and scientific attainments necessary for the office of Public School Inspector. A graduate, as such—a mere pass graduate, it may be, of an inferior University—is not entitled to carry himself loftily, as though all further inquiry into his fitness for so important an office as that of County Inspector were something like an insult. And, in the second place, a graduate, were it certain that his acquirements are