

Minister of Public Instruction with all its accompanying duties and responsibilities. If I had some mistrust as to my fitness or ability to discharge these peculiar duties, I was cheered by the thought that I was to be aided by each of you. Now that I have had the opportunity of meeting you face to face, and of hearing your views on education,—to which the long experience of many of you lends great weight,—hope has given place to the conviction that I have able assistants in you and that with your willing and intelligent cooperation I shall succeed in the undertaking.

I am highly pleased, Gentlemen, with the results of the conference just closed, with the work done, and particularly with the way in which it was done. You have formed, I think, a just and proper estimate of our system of education,—one, I believe, taking it all in all, that will compare favourably with those of other countries. The results of the working of our School law have thus far been so satisfactory that in our recent deliberations we have in no way changed the basis of the system, but merely made such modifications of detail as change of circumstances and even the progress of education necessitated.

These modifications, however, are not without their importance, and I am glad of the occasion to express my appreciation of the judicious amendments you have proposed, as well as the enlightened spirit which dictated your observations.

But if there be one thing in particular, which I cannot pass over in silence, it is the cordial harmony, the fraternal spirit, so to speak, which characterized your deliberations. In so large a body of men of different persuasions, holding different religious opinions,—consequently with diverse interests,—the good understanding that exists amongst you is truly consoling; it augurs well, I trust, for my own term of office, be it long or short, and for the advancement of education. It is evident that on this platform at least, the Inspectors of schools, so fully impressed are they with the importance of their mission, can blend their aspirations in one common desire, can direct their energies towards the same end, the general advancement of education, consequently the general good of the country. Gentlemen, your mission is, no doubt, a laborious one, but it is also a noble one. Appointed to aid in the direction of education, to watch over and preserve all that is healthy and sound in morals and science, you must necessarily play an important role in its administration,—a role the influence of which it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate. You are the mirrors in which the Minister sees the symmetry or deformity of our educational system; you are his lieutenants; on you he must confidently rely. In the direction of the common schools of the Province and in the administration of the law appertaining thereto, I consider myself fortunate and honored in having you for fellow-labourers in the good cause.

Besides the modifications, relative to the law itself and the details of its working, you have made several suggestions, which, though not directly affecting these questions, have, nevertheless, touched on education in general. Your observations, Gentlemen, are marked by experience and wisdom, and have been offered in such a kindly spirit, that at a more opportune moment, I shall give them the attention they deserve, not only for the great importance attaching to themselves, but for the respect due to those from whom they emanate.

In the name and on behalf of my two predecessors, whose great and valuable services in the cause of education you so truly and properly appreciate, I thank you, not only for the generous and graceful tribute you have paid to the memory of their labours.

I will now say for myself, Gentlemen, that some of the effects of our intercourse in the conference just closed, will be to increase my esteem for you and to draw closer the bonds that should unite us. While counting on your aid, rest assured, Gentlemen, that you will always have my hearty cooperation in the accomplishment of the great and difficult work we have undertaken.

Ontario Teachers' Association, 1873.

The September number of the *Ontario Journal of Education* contains a very full report of the proceedings of the above named association, the thirteenth annual convention of which was held in the Theatre of the Normal School buildings Toronto. For the benefit of our readers, who

may not have had the opportunity of seeing the *Journal* mentioned, we give a synopsis of a few of the papers read before that body:

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. Samuel McAllister read a paper on the subject of Industrial Schools. He remarked he had called attention to the condition of vagrant and neglected children five years ago, and suggested a method how many might be reclaimed. Although there had been discussion in the press upon this subject, yet no attempt to deal with this dangerous class of children in this country had been made, and they were allowed to grow up in ignorance and crime. According to the School Report there were 38,000 children in Canada between the ages of five and twelve who did not attend school, 5,000 of whom were between 7 and 12 years of age. He asked the questions:—Where are these children, and what becomes of them? Why are there no means adopted to train them as other children? These children are of three classes. Those who have no natural guardians; those whose guardians are indifferent and wilfully neglect their careful training; those whose guardians, although well intentioned, lack power and influence over their children. A considerable portion, however, of those ignorant children grow up and spend useful lives, as shown by many who mark their inability to write, but a large portion go to swell the ranks of vice, for vice works hand in hand with ignorance and idleness. According to the Prison Inspector's Report, three-fifths of the prisoners had no education, or were very imperfectly educated; two-thirds of these were put down as labourers, or having no occupation. He considered imprisonment had very little good effect on prisoners. Many of the prisoners were in gaol from recommitments. He had himself seen a boy who expressed satisfaction at being sent to gaol for six weeks. By the Prison Inspector's Report, one-third of the gross commitments to prison were recommitments. The plans on which prisons in Canada were conducted were subversive of the reformation of the inmates. It had been asserted by the Toronto gaoler that he had more hope for a boy committed for 24 hours than one committed for 24 weeks. He remarked on what he considered the inaccuracies of the returns made out as to the cost of the maintenance of prisoners. The cost of each prisoner in 1872 was returned as \$15.40—it should be \$10.26; this divided by the average number of days prisoners were committed—27½ days—would give \$1.6 per day, or \$7.42 per week; this was a liberal allowance for criminals. The question was; how should they reform this class? Compelling them to attend school had been tried, but there remained another plan yet untried; completely withdrawing them from the vice with which they are surrounded, and putting them into an industrial school, where they could get a proper training and be taught habits of industry. The paper spoke of the satisfactory results of the working at the Western House of Refuge, Rochester, of similar establishments at Philadelphia, Massachusetts, and New-York. 75 per cent of the children sent to the school in Massachusetts are reported as doing well; two-thirds of those discharged from Industrial Homes in England and Philadelphia were reported as doing well. This was sufficient to warrant the establishment of such an institution in Canada. The age of the inmates averages from 12 to 14 years. The cost of the Western House of Industry was \$2.60, which is decreased to \$1.95; New York House of Refuge \$2.21, decreased to \$1.24; Philadelphia \$2.47, decreased to \$1.45; average cost, \$1.55. At the Massachusetts Home the cost was \$3, which he supposed was the actual cost of each inmate. The paper further dealt with the subject of the necessity for the establishing of an Industrial School for Canada. The Reformatory at Penetanguishene did not correspond with the Houses of Refuge mentioned. A model Industrial School should be established here nearly on the same plan as that at Philadelphia; that each municipality should be called on to contribute towards it according to the number of children sent, and also collect the cost from the parents of the children. There was need of an Industrial School in Toronto, so that the children found about the streets might be sent to school. Dr. Kelly asked if the Truant Officer's services were found effective in Toronto. Mr. McAllister said his services had been effective and satisfactory, so far as to the decrease of truant, and in his school there had been an increased attendance. After some further discussion, Mr. J. P. Groat moved, and Mr. Scarlett, of Cobourg, seconded, "That this Association have considered the subject of an Industrial School, and believe that such a school, if established