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GEORGE WRIGHT, M.A., M.B.,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, TORONTO.

There are no public bodies, whose duties are of a local or municipal character, on whom the future well being of a country depends to so large an extent, as upon Boards of School Trustees. Unfortunately, it too often happens that little interest is shown in the selection of the men to whom are to be entrusted the educational interests of a community. Men are frequently chosen for the positions of School Trustees merely that they may serve the interests of their personal or political friends, or to gratify their own ambition for public life. It is to the credit of the majority of the cities and towns of Canada, that the people residing in them do not allow improper motives to influence them in the choice of those who are to decide in a great measure the nature and extent of the education their children are to receive. Toronto has shown a laudable ambition not to be behind her sister cities in this respect. The gentlemen who have filled the high and honourable position of Chairman of the Board of School Trustees have been chosen from among her most prominent citizens. The present chairman is in all respects a worthy successor of those who have preceded him.

Dr. Wright was born in Brampton, in the county of Peel in Aug., 1838. He spent the early years of his life on a farm near his native place, and obtained his primary education in a Public School. He afterwards attended the High School in Streetsville, and matriculated in Victoria University in 1858. He graduated in Arts in 1862, and was immediately afterwards appointed Head Master of the Streetsville High School, in which he had prepared himself for his University career. He remained in this situation for two years and a half, during which time the progress of the school was very marked.

He decided, however, like many others, to give up the profession of teaching, because at that time the inducements held out were not such as to cause many men of first-class ability to remain in it. He entered upon his medical course in the Toronto School of Medicine in 1864, and received the degree of M.B. from the University of Toronto in June, 1867.

After spending a season in New York for the purpose of acquainting himself thoroughly with the methods of treatment practised in the Hospitals and Public Charities of that city, he commenced the practice of his profession in Toronto. Since that time

he has continued to rise in the good opinion of his fellow-citizens. He has taken an active part in connection with the moral and intellectual progress of the community. He is President of the St. James' Cathedral Young Men's Association, and is also a prominent member of the Young Men's Christian Association. He holds the position of Demonstrator of Anatomy in the Toronto School of Medicine, is one of the medical staff of the Childrens' Hospital, and an associate editor of the *Canadian Journal of Medical Science*.

He was first elected to the Board of School Trustees in January, 1875. He became chairman in 1878, and was unanimously re-appointed in 1879. His course as a member of the Board has in all respects been an enlightened one. It has been characterized by a due regard for economy on the one hand, and a full recognition of the just rights of teachers and pupils on the other.

The School Board over which Dr. Wright presides with such dignity and success consists of eighteen members. They have twenty-four schools under their control, in which there are one hundred and forty-one departments. No teacher holding lower than a second-class certificate is employed, and one-fifth of all the first-class Provincial teachers of Ontario are in the service of the Board. The Toronto Board sets an example worthy of imitation in its method of dealing with its teachers. No teacher loses his situation after being engaged except for incompetence or misconduct. Every one knows that his position is secure for life, or until he wishes to make a change, if he does his duty faithfully. Promotions are based on fixed principles, and made in an equitable manner. Every teacher receives justice without the necessity of resorting to any means to bring pressure

upon the members of the Board. The Trustees are faithful friends of the earnest teachers, and this is eminently true of the subject of this sketch.

The enlightened course pursued by the Board during the past few years has had the effect of popularizing the Public School system to a great extent. This is evidenced by the fact that, while the daily attendance only increased from 1,194 in the year 1844 to 2,810 in the year 1868, it had grown to 7,467 in 1878. During the administration of Lord Dufferin alone, as was stated in the address presented to him by the Board on the eve of his departure from Canada, the number of teachers was more than doubled.

The total number of pupils registered in 1878 was 11,487,



(From a photograph by Hunter & Co., Toronto.)