

have your forbearance, as well as your support, in any efforts I may make towards this end.

I let us keep in mind that we assemble here as a deliberative body, with the purpose of bringing our opinions to bear upon the general interests of education in the country, and of those engaged in it. To do this successfully we must reduce those opinions to a focus, though they may be as varied as the colors of the rainbow.

The programmes of business which the Board of Directors, and the Committees of the High School, Public School, and Inspector's Sections have prepared, will make the three days of our meeting very busy ones. I am sure they will be pleasant, and I trust they will be profitable, so that we may be able to look back to the Convention of 1886 as one in which valuable progress was made in the cause which we all have so much at heart.

I propose to pass in review some of the important reforms that have had their origin in the deliberations of these Conventions, and I do this that we may be encouraged and stimulated in our work, and that some of our younger fellow-workers who have not yet borne the burden and heat of the day, may be convinced of the utility of our meetings, which, strange to say, they are disposed to question.

When this Association began its labors one of the first things it attacked was the method of granting certificates to teachers. There were then as many centres of examination for certificates as there were counties, and the County Boards had the power of granting all grades of certificates, from the lowest to the highest, with this restriction, that they were legal only in the county in which they were granted, while those granted by the Normal School were provincial in their character. It will be at once perceived that there could be no fixed standard for County Board certificates, so long as they varied with the character of the Board which granted them, and indeed one of the facts which used to be stated in argument against this system was, that while in some counties the standard for first-class certificates was as high as that at the Normal School, in adjoining counties it was almost as low as that for third-class provincial certificates. As early as 1862 the crusade against this defective plan of certifying teachers began, and it continued year after year, with concentrated effort, until a Central Board of Examiners was at last appointed, and a plan of granting certificates, upon which the present one is based, was inaugurated. By this the two higher grades of certificates were made provincial, and tenable during good behavior, whether the recipients were trained at the Normal School or not, the only requisite, as a set-off to Normal School training being experience in teaching.

This is not the only matter that was then taken up. It was a subject of complaint that the inspection of schools was doing very little to further educational progress. The inspectors or local superintendents, as they were then called, were not, as a rule, men connected with education, but consisted of a motley company of lawyers, doctors, clergymen, etc., who in many cases used this position to eke out a scanty livelihood. It would be quite wrong to say that there were not a number of men among them who did excellent work. Indeed the records of this Association, and the presence still amongst us, of men who served the country as well when local superintendents, as they do now as inspectors, prove the contrary. Nevertheless, as a rule, the work of inspection was done in a perfunctory manner, and when the Ontario Teachers' Association began to call for a reform in the method of granting certificates, it felt it necessary to agitate for a reform in the inspectorate, its main contention being that every inspector should be a practical teacher. This point was at last conceded, and reform both in the method of granting certificates and in the qualifications of inspectors were inaugurated at the same time. The result of requiring inspectors to be practi-

cal teachers is seen in the immense improvement of our schools today. Had the Association secured no other reforms than these two, it would be entitled to our gratitude and the gratitude of the country at large, owing to the improvement produced in the standing of the teacher in the one case, and the immense benefit conferred upon public school education in the other.

It may surprise some of our younger members to know that when the Ontario Teachers' Association was inaugurated, if we except the Normal School, there was no public provision for the education of girls beyond what the public schools afforded, and of course in the Normal School the training was of a special character. Girls had no legal standing in our Grammar Schools as they were then called, nor, need I say, in our universities. As early as 1805 the Association took up the question of the higher education of girls; in 1867 it was again discussed, and a committee was appointed to press the subject upon the attention of the Chief Superintendent and Council of Public Instruction, and to take such other steps as they might deem advisable to carry out the wishes of the Association on the subject.

In 1868 the address of the President, Mr. McCabe, was specially devoted to this subject, and the Board of Directors brought forward a series of resolutions which, among other things, stated:—"That the course of studies for girls and boys in our higher schools should be substantially the same. That the non-recognition of girls as pupils of our Grammar Schools is contrary to the wishes of the great majority of the people," and "That the legal recognition of girls as Grammar School pupils is calculated to further the real educational interests of the country." These were adopted, and a committee was appointed "to bring before the Legislature of Ontario the subject of the higher education of girls in accordance with the views of this Association." The agitation was continued until the Legislature put the education of girls upon the same basis as that of boys in our High Schools. In the discussion of this question I need hardly say the High School members of our Association took a leading part, and who will question but that it has been largely owing to their endeavors in the High School Section that the doors of our universities have since been opened to women? It is a fitting sequel to these remarks to state, that this year for the first time we have a girl, in the person of Miss Balmer, who, having passed regularly through our provincial course of education, from the Public to the High school, and from the High School to the University, has carried off at her graduation the highest honors against all competitors.

In a country like ours, where the support of public schools is compulsory upon the inhabitants, it is right to suppose that the attendance of children should also be made compulsory. This was not done when our system of education was established, and our Association was not slow in taking the matter up, with the desire to have it done.

In 1867 the subject of compulsory education was brought before the Association by a paper read by the Rev. Mr. Porter, who was then Superintendent of Common Schools for Toronto. In 1868 a resolution was adopted, "That the rule of compulsory attendance ought to be adopted, as it is at once a just and logical sequence of our system of education, and the only way by which the great evils of irregular and non-attendance of children at school can be abated." In 1871 the principle of compulsory education was recognized by the Legislature in the Act that was passed that year. In anticipation of this the following resolution was adopted at our meeting in 1869: "That in the event of the principle of compulsory education being adopted by the Legislature the establishment of Industrial Schools will be absolutely necessary to receive vagrant children and incorrigibles." Though our law now requires