

FORM LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATIONS IN COUNTIES.

So long as teachers are content to be merely the guides of the young they will be treated with disrespect by a large portion of the community. Even *respectable* newspapers sneer at a man if he is "only a teacher." The teacher should be a man of better training and more culture than the majority of the community among whom he labours. He is neglecting a duty which he owes to himself and those around him, if he does not make his higher training and culture felt in his district. He should persevere, in spite of repeated discouragement and frequent failure in his efforts to awaken a desire for more and better reading, to elevate the character of social meetings, by the introduction of a few interesting literary exercises, and to organize and conduct some kind of a literary association during the autumn and winter months.

He should do more than this however. He should aim to be a leader in the formation of public opinion. He can do much to guide his fellows, without making himself obnoxious by sneering at their ignorance or ridiculing their prejudices. Especially with reference to educational matters the teacher should direct the action of his section. He should fit himself for an intelligent defence of his profession from the sophistical attacks of its opponents, and he should never be cowardly enough to listen to such attacks without repelling them in a decided manner.

What the teacher should do for his section the Teachers' Association should do for the county, and especially for the county's representative in the Local Legislature. It cannot be expected that he can keep abreast of the times in educational matters in addition to attending to his private business and official duties. Even teachers find it sufficiently difficult to become fairly acquainted with their own work in its methods and its philosophy, when they devote themselves exclusively to its study. Those whose duty it is to legislate on educational matters will generally be thankful for information and suggestions coming from those whose practical experience best fits them to advise on these subjects.

The Legislative Committee of the Ontario Teachers' Association reported in favour of the organization of local legislative committees in each inspectorial district. This report was adopted at the late meeting, and we hope the recommendation will be carried out. Legislators will receive the benefit of counsel with reference to subjects about which in most cases they can really know very little, and teachers themselves will gain not only by improved legislation, but in the most essential element of self-respect. This will necessarily develop as their sphere of influence widens, and opportunities for working unitedly are increased. These local associations would be of great service to the Provincial Legislative Committee in collecting information and statistics. By all means let the local committees be formed.

RESTRICTIONS ON SCHOOL BOARDS.

Every man has a right to his opinion. He has also a right to advocate his views, provided they are not treasonable or

immoral. We would not like to see any man's liberties lessened, but we would not object to the enactment of a law which would prohibit the adoption by Parliament of undigested opinions, simply because they may be stated forcibly by some member whose personal interests have blinded him to the rights of others. Either one of two things might fairly be expected: important reactionary amendments should not become law until the session following the one in which they are introduced, or some one in the house should be sufficiently well-informed to be able to expose fallacies, however loudly they may be proclaimed by interested parties.

It is a well-known fact that there are in Canada, and, indeed, in every civilized country, certain classes who would root out utterly a national system of public schools. There are first the people who have too much tone to send their own children to a public school. Then we meet the sectarians, who oppose what they designate the godless secular schools. There are also the rich who have no children, and who are too often narrow, selfish and grasping, who regard it as an outrage that they should have to help to pay for the education of the children of other people.

These people are not strangers, neither are they new foes. Their great grand-fathers were just as ungenerous and just as narrow-minded as they are. Unfortunately, however, there are times when they succeed in gaining their desires, in part at least. This does not follow because they themselves are any wiser, or their arguments any stronger, but because those who should withstand their aggressions are not prepared for duty.

During the session of the Ontario Legislature in 1879, one of the members introduced a resolution proposing to take from school boards their right to provide accommodation for the pupils resident in the municipality or section whose school interests they were elected to control. He was a large rate-payer in a section in which he did not reside, and he claimed that the trustees should have no power to expend money on capital account. He did not argue the case with a tithe of the ability which had been shown in urging the same views in 1851, but while his abler predecessors were defeated, he was completely victorious. He was spared the trouble of effort in accomplishing his reactionary work, too, for the Government asked him to withdraw his notice of motion, and incorporated his resolution with the amended school bill of that year. Protests came from many parts of the country, the amendment was amended so as to remove its worst features, and was submitted in a harmless shape, but during the last two days of the session was passed in its most objectionable form.

We are glad to see that the opposition to the measure, instead of remaining passive, is rapidly becoming active and decided. A resolution calling for its repeal was unanimously passed at the Provincial Convention in August, and we confidently hope that Mr. Crooks will give the matter his most careful consideration. We are convinced that if he does so he will agree with the views of his great predecessor and with the whole teaching profession, that the principle destroyed by the 29th amendment of 1879 was the "Samson lock" of the Public School system of the Province.