

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:

In presenting this, my annual address, I venture at the very outset to bespeak your generous indulgence for its deficiencies, and your benevolent criticism of its shortcomings. I am fully conscious of the serious disadvantages under which I labor in coming after the masterly, instructive and comprehensive address of my able and respected predecessor in office, Mr. Jarvis, at the magnificent convention in St. John last year—an address which I can neither hope nor pretend to emulate. At the same time I may, without presumption, add that while fully recognizing my own limitations, I yield to no man in the sincerity of my desire, and in my efforts, such as they are, for the furtherance of the work, the extension of the benefits and the enlargement of the usefulness of the Maritime Board of Trade.

MEETING OF COUNCIL.

The question of expense has hitherto been a bar to the holding of more frequent meetings of the executive of the board, and the same is true to some extent as regards the general meetings of the board itself. While the board was in the experimental stage no very definite regulation in this respect could well be adopted, but now that it has become so firmly established and has so thoroughly and successfully vindicated its usefulness and its influence, it is suggested that the time may be opportune for amending the constitution, at least as regards

and Westville in Nova Scotia, and Summerside and Souris in P. E. Island, all of which except Summerside have become affiliated with the Maritime Board. I exceedingly regret being unable to report any new organizations from the important Province of New Brunswick, but much good work has been done there, in which your board was heartily seconded by the St. John Board and which will no doubt bear fruit in due season.

AMENDMENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE ACT.

The Dominion Act "respecting the incorporation of boards of trade" provides that there must be a population of not less than 2,500 in any district in which a board of trade may be incorporated. In many cases we have found that this provision acts as a bar to the formation of a board of trade. There are many towns in the Provinces the population of which is less than 2,500 which nevertheless carry on a considerable business, and are none the less interested in the general welfare and progress of the community and in which the organized action of its best citizens working for the common good could not fail to be of great material and moral advantage. In all such cases I have recommended that towns with a less population than 2,500 should either form their board of trade without asking for its incorporation, or should take in sufficient of the county to form a district with the required population and thus secure incorporation. It is obvious, however, that neither alternative is quite satisfactory,

ANSWERING INQUIRIES.

A highly important feature of the work of your executive, and one calling for the exercise of sound judgment, experience and discretion, is the answering of inquiries and furnishing information on almost every imaginable subject connected with the business, trade, industries, resources, capabilities, transportation facilities, soil, climate, amenities and so on of these three Provinces. These inquiries are not merely interprovincial, as between the Maritime Provinces or as between the Maritime and the other Provinces of the Dominion, but to a considerable extent they may be said to be interimperial, coming as many of them do from the Mother Country and her other colonies, even so far away as Australia. This bespeaks a growing recognition of the community of interests, and a quickening of the pulses and the broadening of the aims of commerce within and throughout the Empire. In order, therefore, that the Maritime Board may be at all times in a position to furnish accurate, intelligent and reliable information in response to the inquiries which come to it, it is of prime importance, that, 1st—every local board should be affiliated with it and be represented on its council; and, 2nd—that every local board should file with the Maritime Board a copy of each annual report or address of its president, together with such other data as to the trade, progress, prospects, and requirements of its district as may be called for



Site of the "Royal Oak," Kentville, where Queen Victoria's father lived for a short time.

meetings of the executive council. At present no provision whatever is made as to the holding of meetings of the council, and in order to facilitate the work of the board and to keep in touch with and abreast of the changing topics and circumstances of the times, it would appear desirable to provide for, say, regular quarterly meetings of the council, and additional special meetings when necessary at the call of the president. My personal experience and that of the secretary, during the year just closed point to the necessity of more frequent consultation with the council.

WORK OF THE YEAR.

The work of the board during the past year has been mainly of an educative and organizing character, with a view to arousing public interest and stimulating the formation of local boards of trade in places which are not so represented. In this connection a number of official circulars have been issued giving such explanations and offering such suggestions and observations as seemed to be necessary for the information and guidance of those interesting themselves in organizing such boards.

A circular was also addressed to the mayors of incorporated towns in which there were no boards, with the view of securing their cooperation, and pointing out the advantages which, in many ways, would accrue to a town from the combined action and deliberations of its foremost business and professional men. This entailed a wide and voluminous correspondence with all parts of the Maritime Provinces and has resulted in the establishment of local boards of trade during the year in Yarmouth, Canning, Underwater, Liverpool, Digby, Stellarton

and it is suggested that, in order to meet such cases, of which there are many in the Maritime Provinces, and to extend the usefulness and advantages of boards of trade, this board should respectfully petition Parliament to amend the Act by substituting a population of 1,000 or 1,500 in lieu of the 2,500 at present.

SOME STATISTICS.

Before passing from this subject, and as illustrative of the increasing interest that is being taken in, and the solid advantages that are derived from the active, intelligent and patriotic work of boards of trade, I may be permitted to quote a few brief figures as to recent progress. There are now 138 boards of trade in Canada, of which no less than 106 are in the Maritime Provinces, viz. 27 in Nova Scotia, 11 in New Brunswick and 3 in Prince Edward Island. In Nova Scotia, Manitoba and British Columbia the number has doubled within the last four years. A year ago out of a total of 30 boards in the Maritime Provinces, 20 were affiliated with the Maritime Board, and 16 were represented by delegates at the annual convention. This year out of a total of 41 boards, 26 have been affiliated and no less than 16 are represented by the delegates at this meeting. It will be seen that at present Nova Scotia is largely ahead of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, probably because the matter has been more fully and consistently advocated there, but this is a disparity which will no doubt disappear in the course of time as the beneficial work of existing boards becomes more generally recognized, and the advantages of mutual cooperation more generally known.

from time to time. In this way the Maritime Board would be kept continually and continuously in close touch with every varying phase and development of Maritime industry and enterprise, would accumulate a fund of valuable information and statistics, readily available for any purpose; and would be in a position to efficiently and intelligently perform one of its most important functions, viz., to furnish authoritative information regarding any and all parts of these Provinces to the capitalist, manufacturer, the trader, the workman and the immigrant.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION.

I would go further than this, and would respectfully suggest for your consideration the propriety of instituting a Bureau of Information in connection with and under the control of the Maritime Board of Trade. If we would hold our own in the ever-growing, swiftly rushing tide of competition which confronts and envelops us on every side—we must bestir ourselves and claim before the world that place and precedence to which our commanding geographical position, our temperate climate and fertile soil, and our splendid natural resources of the field, the forest, the mine and the sea entitle us. Less than ever nowadays is there justification for hiding our lights under a bushel or tying up our talents in a napkin. Therefore, I think that in addition to answering such inquiries as come to us, our Bureau of Information should take up the ground heretofore intermittently occupied by our respective Governments and prepare and distribute in likely quarters booklets and literature regarding