

public. They wanted it, he considered, not to talk well but to work well. There was no constitutional reason why it should debate publicly, or why reporters should be admitted. There were many Boards in England doing the same kind of work, thought not on the same subject exactly, to which reporters were not admitted. If there was anything at all analogous in England to the Council of Public Instruction, it was the Committee of Council on Education, which did not sit publicly and was not reported. He could not help thinking that if reporters were admitted, and the debates were published they would have a great deal of talk, and that was a considerable evil when they remembered that the Council was not a body of residents meeting from day to day, or through a long session, but of members scattered throughout the country, who were brought from their other avocations for a limited time, and from whom, therefore, they desired to get the largest possible amount of work, and the least possible amount of needless talk while they were here. Again, it was very difficult to deliberate really when their words were being taken down by reporters. That was notoriously the case in great legislative assemblies. If they asked any member of the English House of Commons whether a speech in that body had ever turned a vote, he would say, 'Yes, on one occasion. That was when Lord Holland moved that the Master of the Rolls should be disqualified like the other judges from sitting in the House, and Lord Macaulay made a speech in opposition which turned the vote, Lord Holland himself saying that if he had not moved the resolution he would have voted against it.' That was one exception, but the rule was that people came with their minds already made up and made speeches in order to justify to the nation the vote they were going to give. If they wanted to deliberate on some difficult private matter with half-a-dozen friends, would they be

likely to deliberate freely, or to change their opinions if there were need to change them in order to arrive at the proper decision, if a reporter were sitting by to publish every word afterwards? That was the way with the Council of Public Instruction. Members coming from the country could not be well informed of the business beforehand; they had to learn the facts when they arrived, and they might express opinions which in the course of discussion they might find it right to change, but it was very difficult to change an opinion after it had been taken down. His opinion was that if reporters were present the debates of the Council would be of much less practical value. There was another danger. He hoped that in time public education and other beneficent institutions would improve their politics; but now they wanted to confine them to their own sphere. They did not want them in their soup or in their education. He believed that if they had reporters taking down the debates, and the newspapers commenting on them afterwards, it would be very difficult to keep out politics. He did not say this on mere speculation. Not long ago a question was raised about a debate in the Board on the subject of the Depository, and if they remembered the comments of the two leading newspapers on that occasion, they would recollect that they both fixed upon the objects of their political aversion for attack. At present the Board was not political. Politics were excluded from it. It was governed entirely—whether it was right or wrong—by the interests of education. That, he thought, in this political world was a valuable characteristic, and one which he should not like needlessly to endanger. He was as great a friend of publicity as could be, and if there was any ground for supposing that the Board did not deliberate honestly, or played tricks with the public, by all means let the doors be thrown open and the reporters admitted, but the object

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