

THE TEACHERS' CONVENTION

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On Wednesday evening there was an earnest endeavour to find out in what way the schools might better express the needs of the community. Six speakers dealt with the subject, three representing the community, namely, Dr. Chas. H. Vrooman, Mrs. C. Spofford, and Mr. James H. Beatty; and three representing the schools—Mr. G. A. Fergusson, Miss H. R. Anderson, and Dr. G. G. Sedgwick.

Dr. Vrooman in setting forth what the community expects of its teachers in the matter of health, pointed out that teachers were in a very favourable position to build up the health of the nation, since "the child teaches in the home a great many things he is taught in the school," and in this way healthy-living and healthy-thinking teachers were a great asset to the State.

Miss Anderson dwelt on the necessity for co-operation between the teachers and the home—"co-operation, physical, mental, and moral, and the greatest of these is physical." Miss Anderson taught for six years in Whitechapel, London, and rather startled her hearers by the statement that "physically, the children of Vancouver are not one scrap better than the children that I taught in the East end of London, notwithstanding all their superior advantages." "Will you," she asked, appealing to the parents, "send your children to us at six years of age, not having been everywhere and seen everything, and done everything?" "You know, and I know that the crying need of the children of Vancouver today is Rest, spelled with a capital R."

This "digest" of the convention is lengthening out more than was intended, so but brief mention will be made of some of the many other important matters dealt with.

Credit for pupils who have put in one, two, or three years in an educational course, but who have not graduated.

Bible Reading in the schools, with the suggestion that the religious denominations get together to agree on thirty or forty Bible passages that might be used without offence to any creed.

The new Entrance requirements, and the Junior High School in Vancouver.

Uniformity in text books in the four western provinces. School Libraries.

"The expert quality of the service rendered by the teacher."

In connection with this latter topic it was shown that within recent years specialists had come into existence in various phases of the field of education—administrative specialists, teaching specialists, and scientific specialists. "The world is coming to listen to the teacher as an expert" stated the speaker on this topic, while another speaker, touching on the same subject remarked that "assistance can be given the schools by the citizen if he will give to the members of the teaching profession their due, as experts in their particular line of work."

To conclude! There was a time, not so long ago, when teaching, in comparison with such professions as theology, medicine, or law, was not seriously considered—by men, at any rate—as a life vocation, but was either passed by altogether, or used, for a few years, as a means to something else. Today the beginning of a change in this attitude seems to have set in. There are several reasons. In the first place, the older professions are relatively overcrowded. Then, as indicated in the preceding paragraph, the "science" of education has arrived, offering ample scope for the most highly trained intellects, and one may look forward to the time in the not-distant future when education will rank among the foremost of the professions. And again, since the teachers have formed their own organizations there has come among them a strong desire to improve their status in the commun-

ity, and they realize that there is only one way to do it—by raising the standard of their service to the community. Requests by the teachers themselves, during the convention, for surveys for the purpose of placing education in this province on the best possible basis, is evidence of this desire. Further, the urging, during the past couple of years, of a longer term at the normal school; and, in the recent convention, the appointment of a committee in the high school section to enquire into the professional requirements of other places in the matter of qualifications for high school teaching furnish additional evidence of the new spirit.

One cannot but express a most devout hope that the teaching profession will develop rapidly, as seems to be the tendency, and that the best manhood and womanhood of the nation will be more and more attracted to the profession, for so much of the mental stability and moral integrity of the next generation depends upon the teachers of this generation.

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