

God blessed the wall vain were the efforts of those who built it. At the close of the prayer, as the inclemency of the weather still continued, the Chairman adjourned the meeting to the Town Hall.

After music from the band, Wm. Boys, Esq., Chairman, then delivered the following address, which we make no apology for publishing in full, as it contains matter of the greatest interest to all citizens of our town:—Dr. Ryerson, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I must ask your indulgence while I briefly refer to matters suggested by the occasion which brings us together to-day. We are told that individuals should, at particular periods of their lives, take account of their religious and worldly progress, and govern themselves in the future according to the results, and I hold that this course, which is thought proper for individuals, is proper also for public bodies. Men who are placed in public positions fail, in my opinion, to perform their public duty, if they do not, at appropriate periods, review the history of the past, and study how to avoid errors or drawbacks to progress, in the future. I feel that one of those periods has now arrived in the history of Barrie, and as one holding a public trust, I propose reviewing that portion of the history of Barrie which seems appropriate to this occasion. Twenty years ago there was no Public or Common School, not, however, without school accommodation, as we were then included in what was known as School Section No. 1 of the adjoining Township of Vespra. We had no building specially set apart as a school-house, but a rented room then sufficed to carry on the daily teaching embraced within the section. As part of a township school section we had but three trustees, and as they were our first trustees, I shall take the liberty of naming them—they were Mr. John Laird, Mr. Andrew Graham, and Mr. David Morrow—all of whom I am happy to say still survive, and bear testimony to their unabated interest in educational matters by their presence here to-day. Twenty years ago one teacher took charge of all our scholars—both male and female—and if there is any doubt as to his labour having been great, there can be none as to his salary having been small, for he subsisted on a sum of £60 per annum. Shortly after the time I refer to, Barrie was cast loose from the Township of Vespra, and in January, 1854, became possessed of a school of its own, and built a school-house of frame 24 x 36, just about large enough to fill up one room in the building we are now erecting. This building, after being enlarged and removed from its original site, still exists near by. It was, no doubt, at the time it was built amply large, yet I find from the record of the school that such was the growth of the town by September, 1854, non-residents were refused admittance to the Barrie School on the ground of its over-crowded state, the average attendance of males being 70—the females were then taught in another building by a female teacher. This state of things continued for nearly a year, when a separate school was established for Barrie, which brought some relief to the over-crowded building. But it was evident that more school accommodation would have to be supplied, and I see by the minute book of the school, that a new school-house was talked of so far back as January 1855. The new school-house, however, never came, and in 1857, the financial crisis which swept over Canada, and left such a depressing shadow behind it for so many years, put a stop to any large outlay that could be avoided. Debentures were then unsaleable, and public bodies were unable to obtain money except on ruinous terms. The difficulty at last was settled by an enlargement of the old building, which then assumed the appearance which it now presents. With the enlarged school-house, supplemented by some rented rooms, the schools of Barrie have ever since continued to the present time. I have struggled—and others have struggled—for the past ten years to increase the school accommodation, but the matter was put off so long that no ordinary expenditure of money would suffice, and it took time to convince our people of the imperative necessity there was for a large outlay in providing a new school-house. But the ratepayers became convinced at last, and gave their hearty approval to an expenditure which will enable us during the next year to erect a school building suitable to the place, and one worthy of the trouble you, sir, have taken to be present at its official commencement. During the time I refer to, a Grammar School building of brick was erected and enlarged, and a Separate School building put up. But the history of the past must disclose to us something more than an earnest desire for educational facilities if we want to be satisfied that we are doing our duty. The state of our religious progress, and our commercial and manufacturing progress, must also be commendable, before we can certainly say we are satisfied with the past, and have cause for hopeful anticipations for the future. Education alone is no doubt a good thing, but without religion and commerce go hand in hand with it, teaching us our moral duty, and placing within our reach the necessities of life, and the objects of honest ambition, there is danger of education being turned to the production of clever rogues, seizing their means of subsistence with unlawful hand, made all the more cunning by education, rather than turning their abilities to

account in the lawful pursuits of honest industry. After referring to the local history of the town, in regard to churches, manufactories, and general progress, he continued:—I think, therefore, the people of Barrie need not shrink from a review of the past, nor feel any anxiety for the future. If they will firmly resolve that religious, educational and commercial progress shall go hand in hand hereafter as in the past, there will be nothing to fear. If the educational accommodation of the town has fallen a little behind in the race of progress, I trust it will soon make up the lost ground, for to-day, with your kind assistance, we have inaugurated a system of Public School accommodation which, with our school known as the Barrie School, Separate and High Schools, will ultimately provide for the educational wants of the neighbourhood. I use the expression “inaugurated a system,” because I hope and trust that our efforts in this direction will not be slackened on the completion of this building. The limits of Barrie extends to a distance of over two miles to the east, and a mile and a half to the south and west, and you may well understand that little children living at the outskirts of the town, even after this large school-house is built, will still be practically without school accommodation. I therefore look upon this building as merely one of a series of Public Schools which must ere long be built within our borders. And the task I have set myself to perform before I will willingly resign my present trust, is to see built a large central school and two infant schools at either end of Barrie. When I see that task accomplished I shall be willing to yield my position in connection with the Public Schools of this place into newer, abler, and perhaps younger hands. The feeling I entertain with regard to this matter I think is shared in by all my co-trustees, and while we believe this building will be worthy of the honour you have done us in coming here to-day, we also believe at some future day, we shall have a system of Public School accommodation worthy of the life-long and successful efforts you have made to give to Ontario an almost perfect system of education. It is seldom that public men are asked to assist in building a monument to themselves, but I have asked you to do so on this occasion, for I look upon buildings of this nature as memorials of your well directed public work during the last thirty years, and when you have gone to your long home, and the envy—aye—and the malice of your enemies are forgotten, your name associated with the noble work you have accomplished, will be handed down from generation to generation, and each school section throughout the country will contain a monument to your memory, as enduring as the foundations of this continent.

REV. DR. RYERSON.—I am glad to have the opportunity of meeting so large an assembly as this here, upon such an important occasion. The natural situation of your town is most admirable, but it is to your own energy and enterprise that you have made it what it is, the *first town in Simcoe*. I am glad to see that the energy which you have displayed in business matters have been carried into school matters. The building of such a school, of which we have this day laid the foundation stone, is an epoch in your educational history. But think not the money spent upon the erection of schools results only in the increase of intelligence among you, though this is most important, it is also a good investment in a business point of view as well. Wherever schools and churches are built, there property has been always found to increase in value. People in our country like to live near churches and schools, and by affording greater facilities for secular education as well as religious education, you are discharging the debt due from the risen generation to the rising generation. Children are not like chickens. Chickens and most of the young of the lower creation, can almost immediately pick for themselves, and hold their own in this great struggling world. But children have to be taught—have to learn every thing. These young people, whose glad faces I am happy to see, in a few years will be fathers and mothers—will be your magistrates, your councillors, your members of parliament. In view of this, how important becomes the subject of education. Learning as far as possible should be made a pleasure. But what child breathing the close atmosphere of an insufficient school room, sometimes uncomfortable from being too near the stove, at another perishing with cold from being too near the window—learning under such circumstances can never be a pleasure, but becomes in the pupil's mind associated with pain, and consequently shirked and neglected. A good and commodious school-house, like the one you are erecting now, will cure this, and you may look forward with confidence to a more rapid advance in your children's progress. The benefit of the Public School System, with all its defects, has at last been recognized. Every municipality throughout the country, be it ever so small, rejoices in the advantages it has conferred, and, looking upon this, I feel that I have not been forgotten—that my efforts have been appreciated. The advantages we possess in this respect over earlier nations can hardly be overrated. Our free institutions are administered by our intelligent and educated people, who are indepen-