

ing instruction should be provided and called into requisition. The schools should be better graded, so that no teacher should have more than forty pupils. Special attention should be paid to the health and comfort of the pupils. There should also be a better supervision of schools. Inspectors should not have so many in charge as some of them now have; they should be better paid, and like our judges, their term of office be during good behaviour. They should be removable by the Government, to whom they should be responsible. But these improvements would be of little avail until the position of the teacher was made more secure. There should be Township Boards of Trustees, and the pay of the Trustees should be largely increased. The teacher made the school, surroundings might aid him in the work, but he was the instructor. After expressing the hope that this country would soon supply a want long felt—namely, that of a Bureau of Statistics, he concluded by urging the importance of the work of education upon all engaged in it. The reading of the paper was received with applause. On motion a unanimous vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Macallum by the Convention. Mr. McGann referred to the effect which the diffusion of knowledge would have in doing away with the physical and mental maladies of the human race. In the Province of Ontario alone one in every 434 of the whole population was suffering from one or other of such maladies as deafness, insanity, blindness, &c. There were 1,412 deaf mutes, 1,516 insane persons, 680 idiots, and 600 blind persons, and all, or nearly all, these evils were caused by a violation of nature's laws. Mr. Hughes (Toronto) said that he was a little sorry that Mr. Macallum had not suggested some means of carrying out the present compulsory law. For one good reason they were not trying to enforce compulsory education in the City of Toronto, and that was because they had not sufficient school accommodation for those who attended voluntarily. This would be soon obviated, he hoped, and the law enforced. As it was now, if an attempt was made to enforce the attendance of children, actions would be instituted against the Trustees for failing to provide sufficient accommodation. The object of the law, as he understood it, was to give the child a right, in defiance of the parent if necessary, to attend school. They had an Act in force in this country which was to all intents and purposes equivalent to the Act passed in Massachusetts, viz., the Industrial School Act, which would be a means of enforcing attendance in the city. He was happy to say, too, that the regulation of the Council of Public Instruction compelling the pupils to attend regularly when they attended at all was being enforced in Toronto with excellent results. Mr. Platt (Prince Edward) said one great omission in the compulsory clause of the School Act was that the four months were not required to be in succession. The moral effects of the Act, he believed, would be beneficial. Mr. Johnson (Cobourg) expressed himself strongly in favour of Township Boards of Trustees. He had not approved of them at first, but experience was convincing him that it would be the best system. Mr. McIntosh (Durham) said the principal result of the passage of the present compulsory law was that it had a moral effect upon parents. He thought it a great pity that the time during which pupils were required to attend each year was not six months instead of four. The good effects of the law were very observable in his county, as he had noticed that in some school sections the attendance had been increased as much as 15 per cent. since it came into operation. The part of the clause which had the greatest effect was that which imposed a rate of one dollar per month for non-compliance with the law. He did not think the clause which allowed the summoning of parents before a magistrate was workable, as there were so many qualifications. Mr. Tamblin (Oshawa) thought there would be no thorough enforcement of the law so long as teachers were liable to be removed if they incurred the odium of any individual in the section. Mr. Hughes pointed out that the law was not enforced by the teachers but by the trustees. Mr. Platt moved, seconded by Dr. Crowle, "That in the opinion of this Convention it is desirable that the provisions of the School Act requiring each pupil between the ages of seven and twelve years to attend school at least four months in the year should be so amended as to require such daily attendance to be consecutive." Rev. Mr. Grant said the effect of such an amendment would be to render the whole compulsory clause nugatory. Mr. J. R. Miller (Huron) thought the present Act was working very satisfactorily. In his county the attendance had increased very much under its operation. If they sought to get too much they might get into difficulties, for he was quite certain they could not carry out such a clause as that proposed by Mr. Platt. Rev. Mr. Grant agreed with Mr. Miller. Many acknowledged that the present law was a good one, but they were only afraid it could not be carried out; and they would greatly increase that difficulty by the amendment suggested by Mr. Platt. They should give the present law a fair trial. Mr. Scarlett (Northumberland) expressed himself in favour of the motion, as irregularity of attendance was a great evil in the schools. Four months' irregular attendance at school would have very little effect. Mr. D. Boyle (Elora) suggested that the annual returns of attendance should be examined, and a portion of the legislative grant deducted for each pupil who had not attended the prescribed time. Mr. J. B. Smith (Wentworth) said the principal reasons given for the non-attendance of pupils in his county were want of clothing, and because the parents had no control over their children, who played truant instead of coming to school. He hoped to see industrial schools established in each county, or in unions of two or three counties, and especially in the neighbourhood of the large cities. Mr. Glashan suggested that instead of compelling four months' consecutive attendance (which could only be enforced with great difficulty, if, at all), one hundred days' attendance should be enforced, which would necessitate regular attendance

for a large portion of the time, there being 219 teaching days in the year. The names of those pupils who had not attended the required time could be struck off the roll of those entitled to receive the Government grant. This would bring the matter home to the Trustees, as they could be held liable for the loss of such money if they did not enforce the attendance of children. Mr. Platt said that in the compulsory laws of New England the attendance was always required to be consecutive. Two months of such attendance was better than four months' irregular attendance. Mr. Boyle moved, in amendment to the amendment, seconded by Mr. McLutosh, "That a clause be enacted in the law by means of which the Inspector will have power to withhold the sum of—dollars from the Legislative grant for each pupil between the ages of seven and twelve years who has not attended school four months in the year." Mr. McQueen said the best thing they could all do was to do their best when they went home to enforce the present law. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Brownlee (Waterloo) thought that the names of those parents who had not sent their children to school the required time should be handed to a magistrate, who should be instructed to prosecute them. On motion, the debate was adjourned.

#### PRESIDENT SMITH'S ADDRESS.

The President, on taking the chair at the evening session, proceeded to deliver his annual address. He said he could not help thinking that these meetings, whether central or local, were of great use to the profession. Education was an experimental science; the teachers were making the experiments; in the local and central associations they came together and heard the results of those experiments, and so forwarded the science which they were engaged in applying. It was also useful for them, as concluded as they were for the greater part in the rural districts, to meet on these occasions and interchange ideas. On the last occasion of their meeting the interest was somewhat taken away by the excitement of an election which was then pending, and in which he was one of the candidates. He thanked those who supported him at that time, declared his intention of performing his duties equally to all, and announced that he had had no hand in any imputations which were then made on those who opposed him, the first sign of a man of honour being to be careful of the honour of others. He had endeavoured to supply his deficient acquaintance with the educational profession in Canada, by visiting as far as he could the meetings of the local associations, but it was difficult for him to visit them all, especially those in the more distant parts of the Province. This had been the first year of a re-organized Council. As one of the elected members, it was not for him to say whether the elective element had worked well or ill. The work had not fallen short in quantity—whether it had in point of quality, he left others to judge. There had been a disposition on the part of the Council to make themselves acquainted with the views of the teachers generally, as, for instance, in regard to the revision of the text-books and the new scheme for the High Schools. There was one change which many still desired, that was that the meetings should be public, and that reporters should be admitted. (Loud cheers.) He believed he could speak upon that question with perfect impartiality, though some charitable people seemed to think that he had some motive in excluding reporters and keeping the meetings private. He could have no such motive. This was his last year of office, and besides, if he did not choose to speak before reporters, one had always the refuge of being silent. But he thought the question required very considerable deliberation before they proceeded to take the step which was proposed. This Council was not administering public moneys. They had no special reason for keeping a very sharp or vigilant eye upon it. What it was wanted to do was to transact current business, and to make regulations which required, for the most part, minute consideration rather than great speeches like those which were made in 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, though 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,