

sufficient care is not bestowed on the choice of persons to direct them, and that their value should not be measured by the yearly contributions in the way of taxes. The necessity of securing good teachers for these schools, and of paying them adequately, is to my mind the chief consideration, the key of the whole question; and until these desiderata are attained—until our people come to appreciate more the worth of those to whom they can safely commit the care of their children at that tender age when the impressions received are most lasting, we cannot hope to see any great improvement take place. In this connection, I rejoice to know, however, that one of the subjects—the harassing subjects—that formed the topic of debate for so many years, has no longer a *raison d'être*. Its usefulness has, so to say, gone. The system of boarding round has disappeared, never to be revived. (Applause.) There is another subject, ladies and gentlemen, which I consider of paramount importance, and to which I desire to allude, I mean

#### OUR NORMAL SCHOOLS.

I believe that they are a necessary adjunct of our school system—that without them we can hardly expect that any serious or real improvement can take place in the character and training of our elementary school teachers. I know that a feeling exists—and it is proper and right that it should be so—on the part of our high and model schools, that they are quite as competent to properly fit students for elementary school diplomas as are our normal schools. I do not intend to discuss the relative competency of the one or of the other. I give them both every credit for earnest devotion to the work in which they are respectively engaged. But the one is essentially a training school, while the other is only partially so from necessity. May we not look forward to the time when our present normal system can be extended in its mission of usefulness so that its terms of training at the central point may be shortened, and that the remainder of the scholastic year may be devoted to some system—like that inaugurated by our esteemed friend, the Protestant Secretary of the Education Department—where teachers and those proposing to teach can meet and receive instruction in the profession. I merely mention the idea as a crude one which has often occurred to my mind, and which would not only produce, it seems to me, better results as far as uniformity in the qualifications required of our elementary school teachers are concerned, but would show younger ones that of which many of them have often felt seriously the want, that is, to know how to teach. (Applause.) Ladies and gentlemen, I have prolonged these remarks somewhat beyond the limit I had fixed for myself at the start. It is not my purpose, any more than it is my right, to take part in the discussions which form the objects and constitute the great usefulness of a body like this; and I trust that I will be pardoned if in anything I have said I have given the slightest cause for dissatisfaction. I am here, in the first place, because of the honour you have conferred upon me in making me again your president; secondly, because of the identity I shall always wish to main-