

wainscoting of oiled hemlock. The black-board surface extends all around the walls in each room.

On the second floor two of the rooms are connected by large folding doors, so that the rooms can be thrown together as an assembly hall for opening exercises and upon public occasions.

The building makes a fine appearance, and is very creditable to the architects, Messrs. Dumaesq & Mott, and the contractors, Messrs. J. K. McDonald & Co., of New Glasgow.

The cost, which was in the vicinity of \$20,000, is the bequest of Mr. John Harkins, who died July 7th, 1837. He bequeathed the bulk of his property in trust to the trustees of St. James' Presbyterian church, Newcastle, to be expended for educational purposes. In 1863 a comfortable wooden school-house was built and the remainder of the fund was allowed to accumulate in the hands of the trustees. This building was burned early in 1893, and the trustees came forward and presented to the town the new "Harkins Academy," as it now stands.

The academy staff at present are Mr. F. P. Yorston, Principal; Miss E. McLachlan, Advanced Department; Miss M. Dunnnett, Intermediate; Miss S. Harrison, Secondary, and Miss M. Gjertz, Primary.

Few towns, with the population of Newcastle, can boast of as good a building for educational purposes, and this one, occupying, as it does, the advantageous position of overlooking the town, will stand as a monument to the donor of so large a bequest and is fitly named HARKINS ACADEMY.

#### Teachers' Conventions.

CUMBERLAND CO., NORTH AND WEST COLCHESTER, N. S.

This meeting, held November 7th-9th, was decidedly successful. The enrolment reached about 140 before the close. The Amherst academy building, in which the meetings were held, has fourteen classrooms, and an assembly hall. On the afternoon of Wednesday the 7th, the visiting teachers heard lessons given by the Amherst teachers on such subjects as—paper-folding, the Canadian flag, digestion, etc. In the evening, a reception and welcome were tendered the visitors.

On Thursday morning, Inspector Craig delivered an address. He believed Association meetings gave teachers clearer ideas of their duties. He stated that our pupils show serious defects when brought face to face with practical work. He urged that teachers should endeavor to teach lessons on the occasion of the inspector's visit, and not merely do a bit of catechising.

Miss Pipes, in her paper on Patriotism, showed that the feeling of love for country is one of the strongest in the human heart. Our mountains,

forests, rivers, and seas, can be made the subject of object lessons on Canada's greatness. It is very important that teachers and pupils understand the nature of our government. Col. Blair gave a fine address, the burden of which was the need of technical schools in agriculture and other arts in this country. Other countries, such as the United States, England, France, Germany, and Sweden, had found it necessary to establish such schools. The teacher could do much by showing the pupils how the plant took in nourishment, how the soil should be broken up in order that the food locked up in it may be of service to the plant, the importance of drainage, etc. Boys and girls must be taught how to do things. They could commence with their school grounds.

A discussion followed. The following were some of the ideas advanced: Pupils should get their education that they may work better; digging a ditch and digging it well, is just as honorable as professional work; we fail in interesting boys often because we teach them against the grain, against their taste for practical work; the farmer's opportunity for self-education in after life being poor, he should have special attention in school.

Miss Kirkpatrick read a quotation from T. H. Rand: "Our school system is worth what the men and women who officer it are worth, not a penny more. Let us lift ourselves up to be noble men and women, that we may lift up our school system." She said the teacher must be steeped in the subject taught—must ever be cheerful and show the example of a noble life.

Miss Davison read a paper on the best way to maintain discipline. The following are some of the principles dealt with in the paper and the discussion:—Even the chance words of a teacher may have great influence. The teacher should sometimes speak to the scholars of his or her responsibility, thus enlisting the sympathy of the pupils, and creating a feeling in the school in favor of good order. Scholars are quick to notice partiality, and to annoy a teacher who does not keep her temper. Prizes are of little value, often doing a great deal of harm by discouraging dull pupils. The markings on the buildings outside are a good criterion of the discipline inside. Plan the year's work. Prepare the day's work. Grant a recess to scholars who have to stay after school, before they resume their work. Talks with parents prevent misunderstandings.

In the afternoon, Miss Graham read a paper on the importance of civics in common schools. [Extracts from the paper will be found on another page.]

Dr. McKay thought the histories should be rewritten, giving a history of governments.