

of the classes of a single school, I have witnessed a competitive examination between schools, and not simply of one or two on a set point, nor even two or three, but of the schools of a large and important township. I will only say, from what I have heard, that I cannot too strongly express my approval of the principle which you have adopted. It is sound in itself, and calculated to be productive of the most beneficial results. I was disappointed, but I was agreeably disappointed, and I congratulate you heartily on the result of your exertions in promoting education. But I feel that I should address myself more especially to the pupils. Addressing myself to them, I say boys and girls, I will say to you that I feel a very strong interest in your educational progress, and that I am gratified beyond what I can express to see so much emulation amongst you of a kind which cannot fail to be beneficial. Boys and girls, I address you earnestly. I am anxious to address to you words of advice that will be of benefit to you now and hereafter. After listening attentively to the examination it is only due to you to say that I feel pleased with the progress you have shown, with the readiness with which you have answered the questions put to you. I am glad to see that you appreciate the advantages which you enjoy. In former days such advantages were not known. Neither your parents nor I possessed them. Mark well what I say—it is for your benefit to make the best use of them. By doing so you will be enabled to be useful and valuable members of society, to make your way successfully and honorably through this life, and prepare for that which is hereafter. I have listened with great satisfaction and pride to your examination, and every pupil has acquitted himself and herself creditably. Although each one has not obtained a prize, each one, I am happy to find, has shown a desire to advance; and if that desire continue to be felt, if the same energy be employed, you cannot fail to succeed. The great and important advantages which education affords were well described in that admirable essay on female education, which was read a few minutes ago by one of the young ladies. Did time permit, I should be glad for even a few moments to dwell upon them. But if that essay has made as strong an impression on your minds as upon mine, it is the less necessary that I should now dwell on the subject. All I will say to you on this point is, consider well the sentiments which that essay contained. Although the young lady did not obtain a prize for it, a better considered or more useful subject could not have been presented on such an occasion as the present. To the boys, I would say the advantages which you enjoy are superior to those which were enjoyed by some of the foremost men of our nation—by some who have made for themselves names which have become historical. When we look back at the history of the past, and see the long list of such—men who have made for themselves reputations and names, which are imperishable—men, who, by their genius as statesmen, as writers and as mechanics have changed, even the social condition of the world—I think you may well take courage and endeavor to follow in their footsteps; and if I live to be as old as some of the men who are here to-day, I hope to see some of you among the foremost men of Canada. (Cheers.) Proud will I be to see it; and happy will I be if by any means in my power I can assist to that end. But mark this, greatness is the reward of toil. A life of hopefulness without effort is death to superior excellence. You never can become great or even good without effort. You must aim high; or, in the words of one of the compositions which was this day read, “Aim your arrow high.” If I would put this in plain Saxon, I would say let your purpose be high; let your aim be to be great and good. But whatever be your aspirations as to the future whether to be engaged in agricultural or commercial pursuits, whether to be foremost in science, in art, or in literature; whether to be foremost in the pulpit, in the senate or in the halls of justice, let the great and leading principle of your conduct be your duty to your Creator, your parents and your teachers. Remember that great you never can be unless you aim to be good. To the parents of the pupils I would say that you have this day cause to be pleased, and not only pleased but rejoiced. You have seen the results of efforts made by you for your children—satisfactory results to you they must be—but the efforts which brought these about are highly creditable to you, and which by persons of less courage would not have been attempted. You have seen your children acquit themselves in the most creditable and promising manner. Their aim has been high. Whether they have taken prizes or not, they have one and all acquitted themselves well. This reflects credit upon you. It affords proof that you have done your duty. Your children appear to have exerted themselves to the utmost of their power, and let us hope that the result of those efforts, under the blessing of a beneficent Creator, may be as beneficial as each of us would desire. To the teachers, also, a due measure of acknowledgement must be awarded. I have not the pleasure of knowing more than two or three of them, but this day's proceedings has shown that they have fully realized the weight of responsibility devolving upon them, and that they have

not in any measure sought to evade it. That the pupils should have shown as much proficiency is evidence of the anxiety, the attention and the assiduity of the teachers. Their task is one that often fails to receive the reward which is fairly and honestly due to it; but whether they receive it or not, when that task has been performed with diligence, they are entitled to the highest respect from all classes of society. I will now say a word or two bearing in the most general view on the subject of education. There were some excellent remarks in the essay on “Energy:” several truths were well brought out. Amongst other things it was mentioned that, in education, religion should not be forgotten; and although I would not stand here as the advocate of sectarian books in schools, I say also that religion should not be forgotten. Religion is a most important ground work in education. I do not mean sectarianism, but the truths of real religion. There was a remark made by one of the youths, in speaking of the Saxon language, with which I was well pleased. He said that, wherever the Saxon tongue progressed over the earth, it had carried Christianity along with it. That is quite true, although, at the same time, its introduction has been often by means of the sword—has been sometimes introduced in a way in which we should wish it had not been. Nevertheless, while, with that language, commerce has become the hand-maid of the Gospel, and while all the great nations of the earth feel an interest in maintaining the truths of Christianity, I trust those truths will ever retain a first place in our educational institutions. (Cheers.) In conclusion, I assure you all that I have spent a most agreeable evening; and I will only say further that, if spared, I shall make it my duty to be present on all subsequent occasions of this kind. I hope that all the school sections will see the importance of being present at them; that they will do their utmost to make them serviceable; and that they will endeavour to maintain them with increasing usefulness and efficiency. I thank you for your kind attention. (Applause.)

The Chairman had much pleasure in calling upon him to say a few words. Mr. Dow, the Reeve, on rising, said—At this late hour you need not expect to hear anything like a speech from me. I will only say a word or two with regard to what the Council has done. Three years ago, we somewhat reluctantly voted to lay aside a certain sum of the public money for the purpose of bringing all the schools together for examination. But the success which has attended the examination to-day—the large assemblage which has been present throughout the whole of it, protracted though it has been—must satisfy us all that that part of our conduct has been approved at any rate. I have no further remarks to make. I am well pleased at seeing so many present here to-day. Mr. Bell has told you so expressively the advantages that are to be derived from education that anything I could say would add nothing to it. (Applause.)

Rev. Mr. McPhail said—I feel that to-night I should waive the privilege of speaking in favour of those who are not in the habit of addressing you. We who are residents of the township are often called upon to say something: I would, therefore, prefer on this occasion to make way for others, only saying one or two words myself. I am glad to observe a marked improvement in the pupils all round. I am exceedingly satisfied with the manner in which the examination has been conducted. It is certainly preferable to what we had in times past, and I feel grateful to the friends who have come from Ottawa to assist us. I think justice has been done to the utmost of our ability—of theirs especially; and I trust next year's meeting will show a manifest progress over the present.

Mr. Thorburn said that he fully concurred with what Mr. Bell and the previous speakers had said as to the very creditable appearance made by the pupils in the examination. He did not see that he could say anything additional to what had already been so well said; nor would he, therefore, at this late hour detain them by any lengthened remarks of his. He had been extremely gratified in seeing so many present during the day, and giving such marked attention to the proceedings—thus showing the deep interest they took in the important work of education. Referring to the interest shown by the pupils, and the very satisfactory manner in which they had acquitted themselves in the different branches, he said that he could not refrain from contrasting an occasion like the present with one which some of them might have seen mentioned by Dr. John Brown in his “Spare Hours.” Travelling in the Highlands of Scotland, along with a friend, they happened to come to a village where a school examination was to take place, and having little else to do they went in to witness the proceedings. No sooner had they made their appearance than the eyes of all the scholars were at once fixed upon them, scrutinizing them from head to foot. Every eye was full of life and mental activity. The work of the day, however, soon commenced, and then—what a change came over the spirit of their dreams! The eyes, which before were beaming with intelligence, became dull and heavy; they were like windows with the blinds drawn; their jaws fell; their faces became