

The public school board has accepted the invitation of Hon. W. D. Bloxham, governor of Florida, to send a drill company of fifty public school boys to visit Tampa, Florida, in February, 1899, when similar companies of boys from various states of the union will also be in Tampa. The railways have made special arrangements for the occasion so that the expense will be slight. Members of the board were of the opinion that it would be more patriotic to send the boys to the historical scenes of Quebec, or to Lundy's Lane, but on the whole it was thought that the Florida trip would do more towards fostering the friendliness between the United States and Canada, besides giving a desirable advertisement to Canada.

The reputed breakdown of the compulsory idea is a surprise to its numerous advocates in Canada, and, while the school authorities of the city of London, England, are considering possible remedies, those who favor the enforcing of compulsory attendance in our Canadian schools may be inclined to review their arguments in face of the facts as they are thus stated. Every time the London Elementary Schools are open there are absent 145,000 of the 754,000 children enrolled, or, roughly, one out of every five. Many of these children are kept away from school by sickness and other reasonable causes; but the statistics of attendance show that a very large proportion of the absentees are practically always away from school, and that their absence is wholly owing to the indifference or cupidity of the parents. It is the same children who are constantly absent from school. They cannot be always suffering from illness, and, as a matter of fact, they may be found any day playing about the street corners or discharging the duties of what is called "a little place." The parents are summoned from time

to time before attendance committees, and even before the magistrates; but there is little practical improvement in the attendance of the children, and the same parents are found neglecting their duty over and over again. In short, our compulsory laws are compulsory in name only. Parents ignore them and defy them.

The possibility of making the Common School a place where children may be trained to run a farm or cook a meal is an idea which bothers our philanthropists every now and again, and brings them to the front as would-be educationists. This time it is the Countess of Warwick who says that there is a fateful tendency on the part of the sons and daughters of small farmers to gravitate towards the town, where wages are higher, where life is more varied, and the chance of competency greater than in the country. So year by year the rural districts lose a certain proportion of their youth, and it is always the best who go—the strongest, the "brainiest," and the most enterprising—while to the inferior stock is left the task of replenishing the nation's granaries. Thus the problem is: How to keep the clever ones on the farm, and give them and the others the necessary weapons for grappling with the problems of agricultural economy. We want to make the next generation of farmers' sons and daughters a little more nearly abreast of the times; we want to enable them to look at their business from many points of view instead of from one—that, namely, of their great-grandfathers; in a word, we want to imbue them with the spirit of wise experimenting. Now it is of little use to try to alter the set convictions of grown men. They have been moulded into a groove from which even the stern teachings of necessity will not make them budge. But our hope lies with the farmers' young sons and daughters.