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OBSERVATIONS OF AN ONLOOKER

AT THE PRESS MEETING.



NOTWITHSTANDING several things, the annual meeting for 1899 was a marked success, despite the unavoidable absence of President Holmes and some other worthy members, despite the tremor caused

in one's interior by going down a fast elevator, and despite the fact that Mr. D. McGillicuddy only made seven interruptions. In every other respect the gathering left nothing to be desired. The financial condition of the association is highly satisfactory, the only point being that a surplus seems to be rolling up which could either be for the construction of some public work or the reduction of taxation. Personally, I would prefer it to go toward deepening the canals to 20 feet, but that is neither here nor there.

There is also some doubt as to the wisdom of the annual report being in book form, but, as Mr. Pirie used to remark in days of yore, there is a great deal to be said on both sides. This year, the indications are that the report will be briefer. The election of officers was eminently satisfactory, so much so, that it seems inopportune to revert to the old idea that a good natured competition for all the offices would greatly stimulate interest in the proceedings. The advancement of Mr. Dingman to the presidency is a thoroughly deserved tribute to a faithful and esteemed member. Perhaps the feature of it that pleased an onlooker most was that he, the editor of a Conservative

daily, was nominated and supported by two Liberal members of the Provincial Legislature, Mr. Pattullo, M.P.P., and Mr. Petty-piece, M.P.P., both of them above any narrow party feeling. This leads one to refer to the outstanding feature of the association meetings, the friendly, social spirit which does so much to promote the standing and dignity of the newspaper fraternity, and which, if carried out consistently, sensibly affects public opinion of the press. Instead of posing as Kilkenny cats, editors can thus increase popular respect for themselves by respecting each other. Next year, the association has in prospect the election of Mr. J. S. Willison to the presidency, an event which cannot fail to be fraught with valuable results to the organization. The new member on the list of senior officers is Mr. Macdonald, of Glengarry, an acceptable representative of the weekly publishers, and a man who may be counted on to do his part faithfully and well. The executive is exceptionally representative and strong, Messrs. Tarte and McKay coming from Montreal, and the other parts of the country being also represented.

The action taken regarding the railways calls for a word. I understood Mr. Cooper's position to be this. Firstly, if the railway companies are disposed to grudge us the 2c. rate, if, as some think, they object to grant any concessions to the press, if we are rather compromising our standing by accepting anything at unwilling hands, and if, as was indicated in the proposed clause by one railway, regarding advertising contracts, the railways are disposed to control the press, then we ought to withdraw from the 2c. rate and hold the association together by the bonds of common interest and friendly feeling, entertained by the members. Secondly, if, after a conference with the railways, it appears that these apprehensions are groundless, that the railways recognize that they get an enormous amount of free advertising from the daily and weekly press, and that a 2c. rate is no great concession for all this, then they should be asked to state what they consider a proper concession. This is, if I caught the secretary's meaning correctly, a perfectly proper and suitable suggestion, and outlines a course that the association may reasonably pursue. At Mr. Pattullo's suggestion, the matter was naturally left to the executive. It is impossible to assume that the 2c. rate is the sole, or chief, reason why members join the association. It is equally impossible to suppose that, if the railways think they own the press, the association can afford to let the idea crystallize into a general belief.

Then there is the banquet question. As Mr. Thompson said, the members from a distance are well pleased to hear such