

idea of a national committee of teachers to be elected at the provincial conventions; also a discussion on a Uniform Standard of Examinations for Teachers, and that each representative communicate with the secretary, Miss L. Harrington, of 405 Jarvis street, Toronto, Ont.

### THE CIGARETTE CURSE.

WHAT MEDICAL EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY.

**A**N eminent Sydney doctor observed a few days ago, "I am one of those who believe cigarette smoking by boys stunts their growth. It is a passion which saps vitality, and for which they will pay a severe penalty sooner or later." And there are many tangible reasons for a determined crusade against the pernicious habit. While delving into medical works on the subject, the opinion of a venerable Oriental who smokes seventy or eighty cigarettes per diem was noticed. Quoth this votary of the weed, "Always use a cigarette-holder, and in its place a tiny plug of cotton wool, soaked with lemon-juice, changing it with each cigarette." This advice may apply to the reposeful occupant of an Eastern bazaar, but not to a bustling city man. We do not press the point, save as a recognition by inveterate smokers of the necessity of taking precautions against the poisons lurking in the cigarette. This is a generation which yields no time nor patience to ring frequent changes with the fruit juice. Accordingly the solution must be sought elsewhere, and by way of legislation.

Visitors to the city comment freely on the number of boys in the streets puffing cigarettes, punctuating their conversation with that fascinating pastime of self-poisoners known as the "draw back." In

ninety-nine cases out of one hundred boys involuntarily drop into this habit. Medical science has only one verdict, and it is fraught with grave issues. The effects vary according to individual stamina. On the Continent, as in England, laws against smoking are strictly enforced in schools. It is *apropos* to refer to the class which is always before the public eye—the boys of the streets. And they are a mere soiled and tattered fringe of their distinct social fabric—the swift fore-runners of an army of wan and pallid youths. Some infest in a motley array the labyrinth of petty city streets and lanes. There is little happiness, and only a few passions, in their lives. Money reaches them by vagrant courses, and a "smoke" is about the first consideration, and one of their "sorrowful joys." When in low water, their spoils are the "bumpers" or "ends" of the pavements; their exhortation is "Got a match, mister?" The appeals come from pinched, unhealthy scraps, from five years and so on to dwarfed manhood. Drifting or struggling, according to the fortunes of war, they are pale, drawn, hungry and careless. The past a sordid reflection, the present a scramble for a meal and a smoke, the future a temporal vacuity—no illuminating glimmer of ambition. Give such a street arab his cigarette, and, stunted and hoarse, one of the most enervated types of degeneracy, his wits will carry him precariously through a brief and bitter life.

There is plenty of proof to be seen any day in confirmation of the medical conclusion that continued devotion to the cigarette is followed by nervousness, exhaustion, listlessness—both mental and physical fatigue. One authority says: "In a moderate use of tobacco I see no harm, except it may be in youth." Doctors