



gation of mental defectives arose from endeavors to secure the segregation of feeble-minded women. The danger of their presence in the community was obviously so great that in 1899, the Dominion Government was asked by the National Council to undertake an investigation of the matter. No action followed. In 1904, the Montreal Local Council decided that it would be necessary to begin the desired reform by securing the proper treatment of defective children. Philanthropic institutions, Catholic and Protestant, the public schools, jails, asylums, physicians, nurses and district visitors were visited or circularized. Several conferences were followed by a large public meeting at which the results were given in a number of addresses. The information was then laid before the National Council in an address at its Annual Meeting in 1905. A delegation from the Montreal Local Council next waited upon the Protestant Board of School Commissioners asking that special classes be opened for backward and defective children. The Board promised that the subject would receive most careful consideration as soon as the need was made sufficiently clear. In consequence the Council printed and distributed a great number of circulars and continued its educative work. More recent efforts to form public opinion and secure government action are noted in recent annual reports and in the account of the Child Welfare Exhibition.

The difficulties met in securing definite information in regard to the number of defective children and the lack of training shown by industrial workers both emphasized the need of compulsory education. Petitions to the government and public addresses have often drawn attention to the fact that the Province of Quebec in this particular lagged behind the majority of the other Provinces, Great Britain and foreign countries. In November, 1910, Mr. David Snedden, Commissioner of Education for the State of Massachusetts, was brought by the Council to deliver a lecture on "Compulsory Education." The address proved most able and practical, not only describing the methods which had proved successful in the United States but containing warnings against mistakes which have sometimes made otherwise excellent laws ineffectual. As the best means of preventing the evasion of a compulsory school law, he strongly advocated the taking of an annual school census along with the usual city census. Further efforts to obtain this fundamental reform are reported elsewhere.

3.—LAWS AFFECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

A study of local conditions and reports at various meetings induced the Local Council to petition the Provincial Legislature for the appointment of women factory inspectors. Success followed in