

Teachers' Convention.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' CONVENTION.

The twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Provincial Association, was held in the Public Hall of the education buildings, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the 11th, 12th and 13th inst. The attendance was good, the papers and addresses able and interesting, and the business meetings of the different sections well and successfully conducted. Owing to the much regretted detention of the President, Dr. McLellan, in the North-West, by illness, Dr. Purslow, of Port Hope, Vice-President, presided. After devotional exercises and reading, and adoption of the printed minutes of the preceding meeting, the Treasurer, Mr. W. J. Hendry, submitted his report for the year 1884-85. The receipts, including a balance of \$541.75 remaining from last year, were \$894. After paying expenses a balance of \$514.01 was left on hand.

The report was received and referred to Audit Committee composed of Messrs. Munro, Dearness, and Merchant.

The hours of sitting for the General Association were fixed at from 2 till 5.30 in the afternoon, and from 7.30 in the evening.

ORGANIZATION OF SECTIONS.

Mr. James Munro, Ottawa, took the chair in the Pub'c School section. Mr. James Duncan was appointed to act in the absence of the Secretary.

Mr. A. Campbell, Kincardine, took the chair in the Public School Inspector's section.

In the High School section Dr. Purslow presided. A time table for the next two days was adopted.

The afternoon session was occupied with the reading by Mr. J. C. Glashan, I.P.S. for the city of Ottawa, of a paper on "The Study of Science in Schools," and the presentation and discussion of an address by Mr. William Houston, M.A., Librarian of the Ontario Legislature, on "The Study of English." These and all other essays and addresses presented during the meeting, will be given in the present and subsequent issues of THE SCHOOL JOURNAL. Mr. Houston's address was discussed by Messrs. Powell, Miller, Pomeroy, White, Campbell, Macallum, Embree, and Osborne. The leading features of the address were in the main approved by the speakers, though some of them thought the principle of "learning to do by doing," might be pushed too far.

At the evening session after the reception of a report from the Executive Committee in reference to the publication of the papers by the educational journals, and from the Audit Committee offering the correctness of the Treasurer's accounts, the discussion of Mr. Houston's paper was resumed.

Mr. Osborne did not quite agree with Mr. Houston's views in regard to teaching. He thought that after the pupil's interest was aroused the teacher should proceed to give formal and regular lessons.

Mr. Sudaby was not in favor of permitting the pupil to read a whole poem, or other article without explanations. Many of them would not remember anything of it.

Mr. Samuel Woods referred with feeling to the death of Principal Buchan of whom it might be said his sun had gone down while it was yet day. In regard to the subject before them, he said that in teaching composition he had always found it of the greatest benefit to tell the class a nice story, and ask them to bring it to him on another day in their own language. In opposition to Mr. Houston's contention, he held that when first reading a poem to a class it was often necessary to explain the meaning of certain parts, otherwise the meaning could not be understood. As regards Grammar, he would commence to teach it in the first form, but would not give definitions, in fact, he could not himself give definitions, as grammarians would want them. He would first teach the pupils the parts of speech, and proceed in such a way that they could give the definitions later on themselves. He would explain the construction of language in a plain common sense way, and leave rules and definitions for senior pupils alone. He unsparingly condemned annotated editions of text books, and would eliminate examinations as far as possible. He has always held that the study of English should be above that of all other subjects.

Mr. Houston replied to the criticisms passed upon his paper. Speaking of his opposition to extracts, he contended that if they made pupils acquainted each year with one poem and one piece of prose they were doing a great deal. Philology he would only teach

incidentally, and not directly. He contended that what a pupil could gain from his first reading of a piece was of more value than anything he could gain from reading afterwards in the light of explanations. At first the teacher should not intervene between a pupil and the author.

Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education, explained the regulations of the department recently issued. In consolidating the school law, he said, they cut down 170 pages of school law to about 69 pages. In the regulations they had retained numbers so that a section might be easily referred to. Then they had put matters relating to Public, High, Normal, or training schools together, and retained only such provisions as would be practical and effective. After referring to regulations in regard to site, accommodation, and equipments, he said it was provided that English should be taught in every school. There were some German and French schools where English had not been taught, but henceforth it must be taught in every school. Orthoepy, he pointed out, was now specifically named as a subject to be taught. Drawing instructions was now made uniform. He hoped before long to introduce Kindergarten songs for the schools. On the opening of the Normal school they would have a teacher for the Kindergarten department. He pointed out that formal grammar was not now required until the fourth form was reached. In history they were somewhat perplexed, but allowed the teachers to teach the main facts of history to the first three classes as best they could. Before another year they hoped to have a High School reader, and where there was a fifth form in the public schools that could be used as the reader. Much attention had not of late been given to reading. He had sent a teacher from each of the Normal schools to the Boston School of Oratory, and when these returned they would have men or women on the staff well qualified to teach this subject. He hoped to provide a text book on hygiene before long. In regard to the entrance examinations, public opinion was divided, but they provided that there should be two each year and that there should be a more rigid course. In the High School course it was provided that the first form work should be that for third-class certificates, and that the second form should be that for university matriculation. They had attempted to assimilate the High School and teaching course. They would thus prevent the multiplication of classes, and let the word proceed upon identical lines. They wanted to popularize the studies of the High Schools, and inspire people with the love of the classics. Language, science, and commercial options were provided. Referring to the proposed High School masters at Hamilton and Kingston, he was emphatically of opinion that the plan would work successfully. As to teachers' certificates, he condemned the making of too fine distinctions. He thought a division in the first, and then second and third class certificates should be enough.

Wednesday forenoon was occupied with the meetings of the various sections of the Association.

In the High School section Mr. Wetherell read a paper on the present and possible influence of this section. On motion of Mr. Embree, seconded by Mr. Dixon, a committee consisting of Messrs. Hunter, Fessenden, and the mover was appointed to consider the anomalous position of Upper Canada College in our system of education, and report to the section.

Mr. Houston addressed the section on the relation of High School masters to the Provincial University. The Senate of the University as at present composed contained very few practical teachers. Outside of University College, High School masters now elect two representatives to the Senate, but they might also, by acting together, exert an important influence in the election of those who are chosen by the graduates.

On motion of Mr. Fessenden, seconded by Mr. McHenry, it was resolved, "That the Senate of University College be urged as soon as practicable to make such arrangements regarding the local examinations as will enable it to allow candidates writing at such examinations all the privileges allowed to candidates writing at Toronto."

Several resolutions relating to changes in the University curriculum were adopted.

In the Public School section Mr. John Munro, Ottawa, read a paper, in which he argued that the entrance examination should be placed at the end of the fifth class, and the examination held once a year. He concluded by moving a resolution to that effect.

Mr. John R. Brown moved an amendment, seconded by Mr. James Duncan, substituting "fourth class" for "fifth class" in the resolution.

The amendment was carried.