

For the Review.]

### The Educational Aspects of the National Council of the Women of Canada.

This Council of Women which held its second annual meeting in Toronto in May, might be called the Canadian phase of the "Woman's Movement," a movement which seems destined to assume large proportions, and to exercise marked influence on these closing years of the nineteenth century.

There are several reasons why this subject should claim attention in an educational review. In the first place, no movement so wide-spread, so influential, and apparently so spontaneous, ought to be ignored by those who are moulding and directing the minds of the rising generation.

Then, the movement is itself an education—a drawing forth of woman's power; but chiefly it deserves the careful attention of educationists, because many of the subjects taken into consideration are educational topics.

Before entering upon the details of the Toronto meeting, one or two general remarks ought to be made in order to answer objections which are often heard.

This movement, as interpreted by its most thoughtful and earnest promoters, does not overlook the distinction of sex. Andromaniacs and extremists are always to be found, but well-balanced, well-educated minds cannot fail to perceive that the imprint, by the Divine hand, of sex, is on all earth's creatures, even on the tiniest trilobite encased ages ago in its rocky tomb. "Everywhere," to borrow Professor Drummond's phraseology, "everywhere are the strugglers for life, and the strugglers for the life of others."

Again, it need not be feared that this movement will weaken the bond of sympathy or social intercourse between men and women. Rather by developing woman's intellectual nature will it increase their mutual points of interest.

But we turn now to Toronto. The hall in the normal school, where the meetings were held, was distinctly a woman's council-chamber. Tasteful hands had draped flags and arranged palms, ferns and flowers in profusion, while two little girls in white dresses acted as pages and flitted about the hall with messages and notes.

The delegates, over one hundred in number, came from twenty-one local councils and federated societies. They were sensible, business-like, non-aggressive looking women; quietly, rather plainly dressed. From British Columbia, from the Maritime Provinces, from Quebec, and from other parts of our broad Canada, they had come at their own expense to take counsel with each other on various subjects—schools, factories, libraries, charities. On the platform were the presi-

dents of local councils, or their representatives—leading women selected not for their social position, though that was self-evident, but for their intellectual and business capabilities as evidenced by work done in their local councils.

The President, Lady Aberdeen, is a woman of commanding presence, powerful intellect and great executive ability, yet withal intensely feminine, as shown by a winning sympathetic smile and a certain quiet, deliberate way of addressing an audience.

Silent prayer opened the meeting. After the roll call, the President stated, in her reply to the address of welcome, "that the special object of the Women's Council is not to right any particular wrongs, but to keep in mind a high ideal of *education* and *culture* in every city where it is formed."

Reports from the local councils occupied the morning.

In the afternoon three educational topics were discussed. The first, "Manual and Technical Education," was thoroughly handled from one point of view. Mrs. Wood's (of Montreal) paper gave a full and clear account of the development of this form of education in Great Britain and on the continent. The Finsbury College, London, and a number of agencies in England tending in this direction, were mentioned. Reference was made to the progress of manual training and household instruction in France, Germany, Italy and other European countries, and to the attention given to the subject by the great thinkers of the day.

Mrs. Macnaughton, of Montreal, followed with a paper on the same subject in reference to Canada. She spoke of the paucity of instruction in this direction in every part of the Dominion, as with the exception of recent modifications in the Ontario school law, no such course is laid down in the school curricula of the various provinces. She also said that on the artistic side Canada was lamentably deficient, but that steady improvement was being continually made. Mrs. Stevenson read a breezy paper on the same subject. The gist of it was that "women's brains were being educated at the expense of men's stomachs."

One of the St. John delegates (the writer of the present paper) was almost tempted to give another view of the subject. The time did not, however, seem opportune for opposition. The subject will doubtless come up again for consideration.

The next topic was the "Duty of Parents" as regards education and co-operation with teachers. Miss Hendry, of Hamilton, read the first paper. She took strong ground in favor of combination between parents and teachers for the benefit of the children. The parent should give the teacher some idea of the child's