

EDITOR'S MAIL

Honoring the Ladies at the Banquet

A note in your paper yesterday regarding a question regarding the appreciation of the ladies of the Victoria Division on the occasion of the banquet on Tuesday night. Now, Sir, I presume the writer of that note must have been still at the tables instead of being up in the hall where the good things were being said about the excellent spread, and the kindness of the ladies, and not being satisfied with a mere assent, the Grand Division showed their thankfulness by a standing vote.

As the room was small and the tables had to be filled again, those who had been at the first tables went up to the Victoria Division room, and after the chairman and others thought it time the second tables had been emptied, proceeded to call for music, and then two addresses by the Most Worshipful Patriarch's representative, a most hearty vote of thanks, moved by Arthur Simpson, P. G. W. P., and seconded by John Anderson, P. G. W. P., was put by the chairman and a rising vote decided with what pleasure the Grand Division had been entertained.

The ladies of Victoria know their W. P. too well to think that he would allow their services to go unrecognized. The Grand Division and Prince Edward also were also included in the thanks, for they had something to do in providing some of the good things on the tables. Whoever the writer of the note may be, he certainly could not have heard the many expressions of gratitude which were heard from the members of the Grand Division or they would never have dreamed of the possibility of an oversight. There had been no formal program provided for the banquet, and as the hours were late and some members had 20 miles and more to drive after, there was no disposition to have a prolonged meeting.

In conclusion I can assure that writer, and the ladies that there was no lack of appreciation and thankfulness for their kindness.

Yours, etc., G. W. P. P. S.—We regret exceedingly the oversight in not extending an invitation to the press to attend the banquet. It was a case of "what's everybody's business is nobody's business." Had we done our duty here we might have had a report of the banquet and the vote of thanks recorded. We will try and do better at the centennial celebration.

STAND TOGETHER! New York, Oct. 25.—A Paris special to the Evening Sun says: Prince Henri of Orleans has written a letter to the Matin declaring that France has a right to an outlet from the Nile, and appealing to all Frenchmen to stand together in defense of that right.

Our School System in Danger

Sir.—A person signing himself "Agricola" has recently through your widely circulated journal, favored the public with two letters on the School question. For the first of these you felt it necessary to apologize to your readers, which you did by explaining that it represented an extreme view written in a jocular vein and was not to be taken seriously. If it was a joke "Agricola" is hardly to be complimented on the quality of his wit. His chief characteristic seems to be an utter and shameless disregard for truth. Evidently he considers himself much superior to the claims of common honesty. His wild and reckless assertions are no less ridiculous than are the lofty airs he gives himself when speaking of the teachers, when it would be no concession on his part to treat as his equals. In his second letter he surpasses even himself. Not satisfied this time with slandering the teachers he proposes to slander the people of the whole province, and in order to do so, shuts his eyes to facts well known to every intelligent school boy. That second letter of his, filled as it was with exaggerations, misrepresentations, and untruths, all tending to blacken the fair fame of this province, should arouse resentment everywhere and should serve to open the eyes of the people generally to the unscrupulous character of the attacks now being made upon our non-sectarian schools.

Whether the teachers were justified or not in passing the resolution which has aroused the ire of "Agricola" is a question concerning which there is room for a difference of opinion. But certainly it is illogical that some one should speak out plainly on this matter; for if things go on for the next twelve years as they have for the past twelve, our whole school question will have to be fought out over again. This is a matter of vital importance, not to the teachers especially, but to the whole province. The fact is that our Public School system is being slowly but surely undermined; and "Agricola's" letters are nothing more or less than an attempt to persuade the public that the schools are unworthy of support, and to pave the way for a change which will place us, with respect to education, just where we were thirty years ago.

There are two reasons for this undermining process. One is the Government's desire—a very natural one under the circumstances, to reduce expenditure. The other is a determination on the part of some to cripple the non-sectarian schools, so that room may be made for the growth and extension of sectarian schools. While the public schools are being loyally accepted by the great majority of all classes and creeds, there is no denying the existence of a small but very active and determined minority bitterly hostile to the public school system, and desiring nothing so much as its overthrow. How far the "power-thats-be" are the accomplices of this party, and how far its dupes, is an open question. The result is the same. Certain necessary provisions of the School Act have, for years, been quietly ignored, with this result among others, that in this thickly peopled province there are no fewer than one hundred and eighty schools with a daily average attendance much lower than that required by law. In some cases the attendance is only about one-third of that required. Instances can be cited where teachers are employed and paid wholly by government to teach the children of two or three families all of whom are within easy reach of other schools. Thus the cost of education increases as the efficiency of the schools decreases; and this unnecessary, injurious, and altogether illegal increase in cost is made an excuse for withdrawing legitimate support. It is high time for the friends of the public schools to bestir themselves.

As one taxpayer, I feel it my duty to assert that our non-sectarian public schools are worthy of public support, that any other system possible to us would be much more costly and less efficient; and that this province really cannot afford to have poorer schools than it has now. We must go forward, not back. We need a better trained class of teachers, with no admission to the profession for those who do not show a natural talent for teaching. We need that the teachers shall be spurred up to their work by constant and thorough supervision. The course of studies should be simplified and made more practical. And we need above all things also that the provisions of the School Act shall be strictly enforced; that the management of the schools' system shall be left much more largely in the hands of the Superintendent, aided by his Inspectors; and that every little politician, whose highest ambition is to catch a vote here, or avoid losing one there, shall no longer feel himself free to meddle with it.

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