

WARM DISCUSSION.

The regular meeting of the Teachers' Association convened at the usual hour October 26th, in the 13th district school-room and was called to order by President W. M. Stewart. Prayer was offered by H. Cummings and the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The committee appointed to review the constitution and by-laws submitted their report. Several articles of the revised constitution were read and approved, and action on the balance was deferred until the next meeting.

The regular programme was then taken up, Prof. Orson Howard's lecture on collecting and preserving botanical and zoological specimens being the first feature. The gentleman described in a clear and interesting way how animals, birds, insects, reptiles, worms, etc., might be prepared for school cabinets and preserved. He recommended the use of powdered arsenic to preserve skins of birds and animals, alcohol for worms and soft specimens, while insects dipped in a solution of corrosive sublimate and alcohol would keep on pins for many years. Botanical specimens should be dried and pressed, except the seeds, which could be kept in bottles or little boxes.

He gave numerous illustrations to show how the teacher could interest and instruct his school in natural science by the use of specimens. The food and habits of animals can be told from their anatomy; thus the sharp teeth and claws of the carnivorous, the hoof and grinders of the herbivorous, etc., show the adaptation of different food and conditions. He also showed how nature had provided bright colors and honey in flowers to attract bees and other insects, that the pollen could be distributed and the seed impregnated; how the seeds when mature are provided with cotton that the wind may distribute them, or burs that the animals may do the same, while other seeds have pods that burst with such force as to scatter the seed to quite a distance. He recommended that more attention be given to such instruction in our schools.

The next excuse was the discussion of the merits and demerits of the consolidation of the city schools into four districts, which was opened by Mr. J. J. Walton.

The gentleman from the start expressed himself strongly in favor of consolidation. On the principle that "too many cooks spoil the broth" he thought that the sixty-three trustees of this city could not work as efficiently as a smaller number. The present independent condition of the schools, ungraded, and without a system or given course of study, was expensive and detrimental. Some of the trustees that control them know little about modern methods and means of education; and, receiving no salary, take little interest in their schools. He described the system in Kansas and California, and the economy and efficiency of a proper system of graded schools.

He thought that if the school districts were consolidated into four a proper gradation could be effected and that number of high schools maintained at a cost less than with the present system.

Mr. Collins was opposed to the move. He censured Supt. Stewart for arranging for the teachers to discuss this important matter in which they are particularly interested, after the application had been made and such discussion would be of no avail. However, he wished it understood that he was opposed to the movement and thought that if any change were made the schools should be consolidated into one district and put under one management. He pointed out the many imperfections of the present system and said the lawmakers should understand and correct them. He favored waiting for the Legislature to act in the matter.

Superintendent Stewart explained that he had presented the application to the County Court under the advice of Judge Marshall, and that it was not too late for the teachers to have an influence with the court. That body would hear arguments pro and con and decide according to the wish of the people.

Mr. Martin offered a resolution to the effect that the teachers oppose the application Supt. Stewart had made; that they censure the last Legislature for inaction in this matter, and urge the next one to give a good system of free schools. The resolution was not carried.

Prof. J. H. Paul showed that the county court had the power to effect the consolidation, and argued that it would be the best thing to do under the existing laws. He was not willing to wait for the uncertain action of the next Legislature. Graded schools there must be, and he saw no better way to get them than the one proposed. He showed that if the city was made one district there could be but three trustees, and of course many districts could not be represented in that board. He thought this undemocratic. If there could be a trustee from each precinct he would then prefer making one district of the whole.

Mr. Worstel said that some districts would have to be divided and the law provides that in such a case equitable provision must be made for a new schoolhouse, etc. He thought this would be a grave objection to the proposition.

President Stewart said that nowhere in the Union could be found a city school system as large as ours under three trustees. There were generally from seven to fifteen. The lines of the proposed division would make four districts of about equal wealth and population to support an equal number of graded schools.

The discussion was animated on both sides, and had extended an hour beyond the usual time of closing the meeting, when it was abruptly ended by the carrying of a motion to adjourn.

H. CUMMINGS, Secretary.

CURRENT TOPICS IN EUROPE.

M. de Talleyrand was without doubt the greatest of French diplomats, and the recent publication of his correspondence throws a flood of light on the secret history of European politics during the early part of this century. As all readers of history will remember, after Napoleon's disastrous campaign to Moscow and his retirement to the island of Elba, the representatives of the great powers of Europe met in congress at Vienna to arbitrate their differences, and re-arrange the map of Europe. Talleyrand was the representative of France to this congress and his description of royal personages and customs is highly interesting. He says: "I left Paris on the 16th and arrived in Vienna on the 23rd," that was rapid journeying for those days, but now the distance is made in twenty hours. In another place he says: "The Princess of Wales has just left Strasbourg. She accepted an invitation to Madame Francks, the banker's wife, and dined all night. Her manner of acting at Strasbourg explains perfectly why the Prince Regent prefers seeing her in Italy rather than in England." Here we see a glimpse of the morals of Royal Courts. Of Russia he says: "She is in reality an Asiatic power, but the provinces she has wrested from Sweden, from Prussia, and her lion's share of the unfortunate kingdom of Poland will make Russia a European power." It was at this congress of nations, after the downfall of Napoleon, that Russia put forth her claims to westward and southward extension, and even went so far as to claim some of the German provinces on the Rhine. The arrival of the Duke of Wellington at the congress Talleyrand thus describes: "On the arrival of the Duke of Wellington at Vienna the Emperor of Russia questioned the Duke concerning the loyalty of the French army, to which the Duke replied, 'As good as ever against foes, but good for nothing against Napoleon.'" This shows that Wellington was the first one to accurately gauge the situation.

The escape of Napoleon from Elba and the prompt adhesion of the French army to the popular hero broke up the Congress of Vienna. The sovereigns once more laid aside their differences in their dread of the common foe, and hastily reconstructed an alliance that was rapidly falling to pieces. Up to the last all was joy and festivity at Vienna. Talleyrand writes: "Everywhere one meets with emperors, kings, empresses, queens, princes, dukes, etc. The Austrian court pays for everything, and the cost cannot be less than 220,000 florins per day." A statesman who had lived through the French Revolution, and had witnessed the Emperor Napoleon's mode of dealing with crowned heads, cannot have felt much of the awe and majesty that doth hedge a king. Talleyrand, however, did the French nation good service at Vienna. In spite of the sad reverses which befell the French armies, he