

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

CONFERENCE NOTICE.

The sixty-seventh semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will convene in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning, October 4th, 1896.

The officers and members of the Church generally are cordially invited to attend the meetings of the Conference.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,
GEORGE Q. CANNON,
JOSEPH F. SMITH,
First Presidency.

CHILDREN'S EYESIGHT.

The reopening of the public schools for another year again brings to the fore the discussion as to the effect of the school buildings and appurtenances on the eyesight of pupils. Upon this point recent tests by competent oculists are of special interest just now. In Baltimore the eyes of 53,067 pupils were examined by the tests ordinarily used by oculists; 9,051 pupils were found to have such defective eyesight as to make school work unsafe; 53 per cent of the children were found not to be in the enjoyment of normal vision. Curiously enough the percentage of defective eyesight steadily decreased with the age of the pupils. The percentage of normal vision was found to be as follows in the different grades: First grade, 85; second, 41; third, 47; fourth, 49; fifth, 48; sixth, 48; seventh, 54; and eighth, 56. No explanation is offered for this improvement in eyesight with age and the use of the eyes under school conditions.

In Great Britain, also, a report has been presented to the education department of the government on the vision of 8,125 children attending 25 elementary schools in London; 3,181 children, or 39.15 per cent, were found to have normal vision in both eyes; 1,016, or 12.5 per cent, had normal vision in the right eye and subnormal in the left; 700, or 8.6 per cent, had normal vision in the left eye and subnormal in the right; and 3,228, or 39.7 per cent, had subnormal vision in both eyes. Comparing the sexes, the total was made up of 3,928 boys and 4,197 girls; of these 43.7 per cent of the boys had normal vision in both eyes, and 33.4 per cent of the girls.

In the English report, the opinion is expressed that the eyes of London school children generally are not injuriously affected by the conditions of elementary school life there, there being no increase of visual troubles as the pupils grew older; the cause of subnormal vision in so many of the children is attributed to the fact that they rarely look at distant objects, and thus fail to cultivate strength in the

organ of sight. In Baltimore, however, it was found that many blackboards and maps in the schools were not placed in the proper light, and the report of the oculists recommends yearly examinations hereafter of the pupils' eyesight and that a uniform system of adjustable seats and desks be adopted and that these be regulated to the heights of the children.

In one particular, these examinations indicate a negligence on the part of parents, who ought to pay more care to children's eyesight than to allow such a condition as that shown, that nearly one-fifth of the total number are unfit to do school work because of defective vision. In very many cases, it was asserted, this defect could have been remedied by plenty of outdoor exercise and good food, much of the trouble being characteristic of bloodlessness; the practice of looking at distant objects also gives relief, and comes readily to those children who have plenty of open air, and who uniformly have the best eyes. The point of this is that much of the imperfection shown in the visual organs is directly due to that which causes more ill health than anything else—the unreasonable persistence with which parents, especially mothers, insist on fixing up their children and starving them physically through a groundless fear that the sunlight will "oil their complexion," or that plenty of fresh, cool—not chilled—air will give them "colds," when in fact air and sunlight are unyielding foes to both the ills complained of.

THE WOOL OUTLOOK.

Bradstreet's for Sept. 12 gives the figures of the domestic wool clip for 1896, as compiled by the national association of wool manufacturers. The estimate is based on the return of the number of sheep on April, this year, which showed a total of 36,464,405—a loss of 3,484,983 from last year's figures, and the smallest total reported since 1875. Here are the figures for four states: Colorado 1,258,373 sheep; average weight of fleece 6½ pounds; wool 8,494,018 pounds; shrinkage 68 per cent. Idaho 973,402 sheep; average weight of fleece 7½ pounds; wool 7,300,515 pounds; shrinkage 68 per cent. Wyoming 1,296,134 sheep; average weight of fleece 8 pounds; wool 10,369,134; shrinkage 68 per cent. Utah 1,902,516 sheep; average weight of fleece 6 pounds; wool 11,415,096; shrinkage 66 per cent. In the whole country the clip for 1896 amounts to 232,474,708 pounds, in which the average fleece weighs 6.38 pounds and the shrinkage averages 60.7 per cent; to which is added 40,000,000 pounds of pulled wool—a grand total of 272,474,708 pounds, which is reduced by scouring to 115,284,579 pounds.

This 272,474,708 pounds of wool in the greasy or washed condition is a decrease from 294,295,726 pounds in 1895, and is the smallest product of wool since 1880. The decrease in clip is relatively less than the decrease in

the number of sheep, because of the gradual increase in the weight of fleeces since 1875. Of the whole visible supply of wool in the country, these figures show a reduction of about 40,000,000 pounds from that of a year ago. Ordinarily this might seem to indicate that there was in store a prospect of better figures. But this is not the case. The comparatively small consumption of wool to date is a suggestion that there is a large supply in the storehouses of manufacturers, held to await a revival of business, which does not appear in the foregoing figures, and which makes the quantity on hand far in excess of the probable consumption for the year to come. This will keep the price down, so that the outlook for an increase in the figures to wool producers does not appear in sight for the wool clip of 1897. Even the shortage in the Australian clip is insufficient to make a raise in prices.

A PICTURE OF OUR TIME.

A French author, Melchior de Vogue, has attempted to draw a picture of our time with special regard to its moral features. He compares it to the time of the decline of the Roman empire at the beginning of our era. He finds that all through the human family can be heard a heartrending cry for truth, for justice and for peace, and the cry becomes all the more appealing as the situation becomes more desperate. Our time is selfish, doubling, elegant and cruel, still beautiful in the bewitching glitter of art and poetry; but it is dead as regards faith, and poor in piety, superstitious in nearly everything else, paralyzed by the noise of conflicting ideas and wild fancies without any creative thought; brought to starvation by feeding on the resemblance of happiness and eagerly watching the falsehoods of theaters; proudly pretending to understand everything but really unable to reverse anything. It has no power to follow the bidding of duty, but is vain in its luxury, deaf to truth, indifferent to misery, asking of earth to be carried in a merry parade to the end of the festival and closing its eyes to the catastrophes it prepares for coming generations.

A stern criticism, but who can otherwise than feel its justice? Is there any other remedy for this condition than that which is offered by the messenger from the eternal Author of our existence? Philosophy has failed; human theology is helpless. Back, then, to the fountain of living water that already has proved its power to save the human family at the most critical periods of its history!

TAXING REAL ESTATE.

In recent years the price of real estate in Utah was run up to fancy figures without regard to its value for any use to which it could be put. As a consequence, when the assessor went around, land was listed at its market value on these figures, making a very high assessment. By comparison with older and more thickly settled states, the rate of assessment on real estate in Utah is there-