THE CHAIRMAN said he should like to say a word of welcome to those who had come, might he say, from less-favoured districts. He thought such surroundings as these should lead to high ideals and that the influence of the more immediate environment should prevent trivialities. He welcomed the Conference to Westmorland, and, in Miss Mason's name, to the House of Education. He looked forward to work characterised by the spirit of earnest reality of which they had just had evidence, and he trusted that the results of the Conference would be far-reaching. The gathering was of a most influential and representative character, as would be seen from the list of names. As Chairman of the Westmorland Education Committee his work was usually connected with administrative questions, so it was a special pleasure to him to attend a purely educational Conference. It will be pleasant to leave finance out of the question and to consider education itself. We need not feel to-day, as so often happens at educational meetings, that like the guests of Procustes, we shall be made to fit the beds provided for us.

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10.45–1.0. DISCUSSION OF THE AGENDA AND RESOLUTIONS.

1. A liberal and progressive Curriculum for children between 6 and 14.

MISS MASON introduced the first resolution—

"That *such knowledge as is due to a child* of a given age be the sole consideration in arranging a Curriculum,"

by saying: The strictures upon education as it is, which have appeared in quick succession lately, have one rather cheering feature; teachers themselves are the persons who are most
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dissatisfied. The air is full of educational schemes and controversies, but the openness of mind which has brought so many distinguished educationists here to confer, not on administrative questions, but on actual education, and also, I venture to think, to see and hear what may be told and shewn of our work, is very remarkable; for everyone present has, I should say, good reason to suppose that he is doing the best of all possible work in the best of all possible schools. But we are living in a time of great changes, and perhaps we hardly realise that the regulations which include Secondary Schools in the scheme of State Education, is revolutionary in character. Responsibility is thrust upon us, and the lonely furrow is not for us any more; we must think imperially, and we must think and act for all.

I think you may really find something of interest in the working of what is rather a new departure. The open secret was stumbled upon by chance, and is so small a matter that I am diffident about mentioning it, but it is the means of introducing children to possibly twice the number of subjects usually taught, with more, and more definite, work in each subject, done in a considerably shorter school day, so it may be suggestive and helpful to describe this lucky find to those who are only too eager to give the children the best that is to be had.

"Do you really want my little girl to study 25 subjects?" wrote a mother last week. Yes, we say, and in less time than she gives at present to half the number, and she will not get a "smattering," but real knowledge, of the sort we all delight in. This child was twelve.

And the children do it for themselves! The teacher is no longer employed in the weary grind of getting in a certain modicum of facts, but is set at liberty for his higher office—to direct, inspire and stimulate.

The first resolution appears so obvious as to secure general agreement, but we have to consider (*a*) the child, (*b*) knowledge, (*c*) time. We labour under some delusions as regards children, and since these delusions have taken rank as "science," we are in danger of losing a chief source of happiness, which an old Greek saying makes to consist in quiet, intellectual activity. I wonder if many young people leave school possessed of that particular happiness and means of joyous living.

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The duty of "developing the faculties" is still put before us, and the phrase is convenient, but we venture to believe that "faculties" are in the condition of Betsy Prigg's friend, "Mrs. Harris." We do not believe in "faculties," but in mind; and we recognise that the mind has many powers, and is capable of activity in many directions. But we do not even venture to apportion the functions of mind any more than we risk the shipwreck of health by attending to the digestive processes employed on every morsel we eat.

Every child is, in the first, and in the last, place, hungry for knowledge. We sigh for the, may I say, loss of intelligence which children seem to suffer as they grow up. We know "The world an ancient murderer is;" and our own hands will not be clean if we kill, or maim, or starve the intellectual life of children.

To turn now to the question of knowledge. Everyone here has probably good reason to be satisfied that the children in his or her school are very well off as regards the knowledge they get; but we may no longer say—to adapt the words of the Prince in *Rasselas*—"how the *world* is to be (taught) is not my concern and needs not to be yours." To turn out brilliant scholarship is not enough. We may not fashion an education after that definition of a cherub, "head and wings, and the rest nowhere"—the "rest," not the radiant head and rapid wings, but the heavy body of the average, and even the dull boys—this is our main concern. The fact is we undervalue children. They are capable of appreciating undiluted knowledge. "The language of that piece of poetry is very childish," said a boy of nearly six, "and Molly thinks so too." Who knows how hard it is for the children to put up with the "childishness" of their teachers? I am not speaking now of the admirable work which is being done with boys and girls over 14 or 15, but I doubt if the children we think such "dear little things" get from us that share of ordered, coherent, progressive knowledge which is their due. We are all agreed that knowledge is not information, and, recognising this, some of us would feel inclined to score out all books marked as "educational" in publishers' lists. Knowledge is information vitalised by ideas, assimilated by a thinking mind; and the fact that education has two stages—the synthetic and the analytic—should perhaps be borne in mind

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in preparing a curriculum. Until he is 14 or 15, the boy's business is to collect those stores of knowledge which will give him material for analytic reflection hereafter.

As for our third subject of consideration, I should like to impress on everyone that there is nothing so elastic as time. A joyous, full day can, we all know, be got in when there are a multitude of things to be done and considered; and so with curricula. The children's joy is increased manifold by a large variety of subjects of study, and if these subjects be steadily and progressively worked through in *books*, the variety adds much to the children's power of work.

The resolution was moved by LADY CAMPBELL, who supported it "as the mother of a quite average little boy," and said that she had found the methods of the Parents' Union School work well with the child, in spite of the opposition, at first, of an old-fashioned governess. She had persuaded the lady to work on the lines of the programme, and, after a year's trial, the governess had admitted that the wide curriculum was a complete success—her opposition had been converted into warm appreciation. One important point was that the reading of the books in the curriculum must be with a view to narration; this habit cultivated attention, so that, without undue strain, a small child would reproduce the passage read with not mere verbal accuracy, but with appreciative notice of the picturesque in description, and of literary beauty in language. Children must only have good books. They could not bear colourless twaddle, though they read it in obedience to their elders. They loved good books—books with a thrill in them. The question of time could be met by shorter hours; this had been tried at Osborne, where it had been found that short hours, inducing fixed attention, made a much more varied curriculum possible. Children could not grasp all the substance of a great book, but they could assimilate much more than would be expected, and they left off with that appetite for more knowledge, which was much to be desired. We were bound to open doors for children, even skylight windows, but we were not to push them through, or even to lead them up to the door. Some day they would remember the peep they had had, and when the time came would enter in.
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MRS. HUXLEY, who seconded the resolution, was much interested in what should be taught to children under 14; she thought it one of the most important subjects that could be discussed. In starting a school some years ago she had found that there was a serious danger of mental underfeeding. A girl of 14, for instance, had come to her who was quite incapable of using a book: this child had been trained too long on kindergarten methods, and had apparently been taught to observe, but not to think. She had attempted, among other means, to train children to use books by introducing them to a large reference library which she had carefully got together, and she found the children eager to make use of the books.

In a discussion which followed, MR. PAREZ laid stress on what is *due* to a child. People were too apt to give opportunities only to clever children, but it is due to *all* to have such opportunities. Utilitarian considerations must be put aside, and examinations must not be allowed to over-ride the consideration of the knowledge *due* to children.

MRS. FRANKLIN asked for the experience of those who had tried the method.

MR. UNDERHILL said that he had found by experience that teaching by books, and especially by training young boys to reproduce by narration what was read, rendered it unnecessary to teach English composition, which thus came to them naturally.

MR. HEADLAM asked how many subjects were included in this wide curriculum.

MR. GRANT had thought, when in America, that the children took up too many subjects and got only a smattering in consequence, but since returning to England he had found it possible to take up a great many subjects. He thought, however, that they should

not be counted mathematically.

Referring to the question of composition, MISS MASON said that it was as natural for children to compose as to walk. Children should not be read to too much once they could read, because children who *read* almost invariably
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spelt well. There were the inveterate bad spellers, but even these were not hopeless. There were two backward girls, bad spellers, in the practising school. One, after four terms of the use of books, could write six pages with very few mistakes now, whereas before she could not write six words without a mistake. The other girl was also improving.

This use of books gave the poorest children, too, an equal chance with others, and though they would never perhaps do great things at schools, their minds would be awakened and furnished. One very important point was to avoid explanations. The book must be left to explain itself, unless the children definitely ask "What does so-and-so mean?"

2. The same curriculum (optional) for all Preparatory and Lower Schools—such curriculum should be broad enough to allow scope for individuality in both schools and scholars.

MISS MASON introduced the second Resolution—

"That, as *all* children have the right of entry into certain fields of knowledge, the curricula of Lower Schools, generally, be broad enough to enable them to vindicate this right,"

by saying: We cannot define exactly those fields of knowledge into which children have a right of entry, but they should know about the world they live in, *i.e.*, nature lore to begin with, and then science. They should know about the past—history, about the present—current events; they should have some earth knowledge—geography. They should know something of the thought that has made the world—literature, the classics; and, because we must get into touch with other nations, they should learn one or two modern languages. Their innate powers, as well as the common needs of life, indicate mathematics, music, and pictorial art; and these are only some of the subjects, an introduction to which is due to children. We aim at entering, not exhausting, any field of knowledge, but we really do enter—we do not skirmish on the outside with what is called elementary work. The area is so wide that economy of time is a vital consideration. It is possible that we all "mark time" in school far more than we are
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aware; at any rate, by using books, a given amount of work can be done in one-third of the time generally given to it, and if the books be living and masterly, the work is far more thorough than oral teaching can secure.

The day's work is done in the morning school-hours (varying from 9.30–11.30 to 9–1, according to age). There is no preparation or writing done out of these hours—the only additional work is 1½ hours on four afternoons, given to handicrafts, drawing and nature-work out of doors. Teachers and scholars alike are relieved by the fact that there is very little "correction." The necessary writing, the answering of a test question and the like, is

done in ten minutes or so, taken off a given lesson; and children are relieved altogether from the necessity of reporting the knowledge that has been presented to them. They know their way about in their books and can refer back to fill up any hiatus.

May I say one word about the correction of examination papers. A child's set of papers is to him a work of art, and it is hurtful to him to see a sheet scored with red or blue pencil marks. Errors in construction are rarely made by children who work with books, and errors of fact, too, are unusual, while the familiar "howler" is unknown. The habit of reading, with the knowledge that some part of your work must be reproduced, perhaps in writing, leads to good spelling; and perhaps the best way to treat errors in spelling is for the teacher to note the most common in any exercise, put them on the board and let the children visualise them.

To turn to the question of a common curriculum, which was raised in this Resolution as it stood originally, there is a little fear of a common scheme of work, as it is supposed to tell against originality both in children and teachers. But on the other hand, many a harassed and over-worked head of a school is inclined to cry with the poet—

"Me, this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires."

Indeed, the beguilement of "chance desires" is especially disastrous to the brilliant teacher. Coherent and progressive education, and individuality of treatment if not of subject, would seem to be secured by a common curriculum upon which much labour has been spent. [p 512]

But such curriculum must be designed upon sympathetic and not on academic lines. It must be educational and not, to coin a word, "examinational"; and, for this reason, while a syndicate of experts might do good service in preparing examination questions upon which scholarships and the like depend, the very fact that fair play to all comers is the first consideration in setting such a paper, is apt to sterilise it a little, to cast it in a certain academic mould.

MR. WYNNE-EDWARDS, in proposing the resolution, felt very strongly that we were not doing all we could for the children; it was a question which touched us all very nearly. He thought that everyone would agree that boys and girls suffered in ordinary schools from the want of individual treatment. Every master knew of boys, said to be clever at home, but who at school appeared to be blockheads, and the fact that he had failed to reach any particular boy was always a matter of regret to him. Boys had suffered in the past from too early specialisation in the classics, and he felt sure that a wider curriculum was desirable at first. He would much like to know how the wide curriculum in question could be applied to large schools with large classes. He greatly welcomed the idea of giving many open windows to all, thus giving even the dull boys a chance of peeping and perhaps of entering in.

MISS GAVIN, in seconding the resolution, felt that she represented one of those who suffered from the "delusions that had become science." In her Lower School, where children remained till eleven, she had been working on lines opposite to those proposed by Miss Mason, for she felt that by cutting down subjects she was laying a firmer basis for future study. She could not quite understand how a class of twenty or thirty children could be brought up on books. How could their work be tested? She believed that all children had

curiosity, and would do a good deal for themselves. She considered that one foreign language was enough, and that subjects should be arranged in departments; possibly this arrangement would make the difference between her curriculum and the one suggested, less great than at present it seemed to be.

In the discussion, LADY CAMPBELL asked for the experience of those who had worked large classes. A class of twenty was
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a large one (several members gave evidence of much larger classes). She believed that it had been found that in an Elementary School, where the work had been confined to the three R's, that the work in those subjects was much lower in average than in Elementary Schools with a wider curriculum.

MISS MASON saw no reason why the narration method should not be quite easily worked in large schools. One child here, another there, would be chosen to narrate a part of what they had been reading. The children would not know who would be asked, and would work on trust.

MRS. FRANKLIN said that there was a strong feeling abroad that a wide curriculum meant shallow knowledge. It often happened (and she gave an instance of a lesson out of many she had seen) that the teacher covered a long period, that the children only got hold of a few names, and that they left off without feeling any further desire for more. She suggested that in a large class the teacher might divide the children—some might be reading, some narrating, and some writing a *résumé*. Children who had been brought up on books were accustomed to deal with books, and were not apt to think that they knew all that there is to be known, but would regard knowledge in a spirit of humility.

MRS. WOODHOUSE had been struck with the power of attention and concentration shown by the children of the Practising School. Many years ago the late Bishop Creighton had said to her, "Give your children a large library when they are young, and then when they have grown up you can offer them one book." Only recently a kindergarten mistress had said to her, that she had found children of only six and seven so eager for their reading books, even in recreation time, that she was obliged to take them away. On the other hand, Mrs. Woodhouse could not quite see how so many subjects could be got in without leaving out others of great importance.

LADY CAMPBELL asked if Mrs. Woodhouse would say what she thought was being left out.

MRS. WOODHOUSE thought the important thing was to form habits—habits of attention, concentration, etc., and that when these habits were formed the children would be drawn to
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books. She thought that Miss Mason's system would certainly encourage the study of the humanities, and she quite admitted the value of such knowledge; but would not Latin and mathematics suffer if more attention were not given to them.

MISS MASON questioned if anything *was* being left out. The use of books made for wide interests and good habits. If she might say so, teachers needed to be more passive and to leave *knowledge* to do the work. One of the girls in the Practising School was the daughter of an artist; she had done some really beautiful groups in clay; and if those present would look at her examination papers they would feel that, in spite of this strong bias, nothing had been killed in the child nor had she left anything out. To spend the time in forming habits was as if we were to spend all our mealtimes in Swedish drill! We were only too apt to try to form habits without realising that what is necessary, and, indeed, all we can do, is to give the food on which the habit may live; and that it is on the food and not on the habit we must concentrate our attention.

MRS. WOODHOUSE asked what about Latin, arithmetic, and French.

MISS MASON asked if it were enough to take girls of sixteen to quadratics. As to the other work, she would ask the Conference to judge for themselves after seeing the examination papers.

3. The testing and directing of the work of the curriculum by examinations at the end of each term—the last set of papers done by a scholar should qualify for a Leaving Certificate from the Lower School.

MISS MASON introduced the third Resolution

"That terminal examinations be set on *all the books read* in the term, and that these be numerous and living,"

by saying: "Terminal examinations" is a burning question, but it is the nature of the examination that must be borne in mind. The children have read a certain number of pages in their books, and the questions are on those pages, and are of a sort that no cramming would help them to answer, not even a careful study of "Tit-Bits!" There are one or two questions in each subject, and the children have no difficulty in
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answering when they have been accustomed to reproduce; (may I say that this is original work, because no one can do more than assimilate and produce in a new form that which he has received). There is no competition, no making of lists, the marks represent a remark, and the children do the work for the love of knowledge and not for place or prize (by the way, we do not give prizes).

Much care is taken that the examination questions shall not lend themselves to the guileful arts of the crammer. For example, last term *Westwood Ho!* was read as illustrating one feature of the reign of Elizabeth. The question, which no crammer would have thought of, was "Write twelve lines of blank verse on 'The Brotherhood of the Rose';" and here is an answer, written offhand in half an hour, for this sort of work results in a certain alertness of mind. I must admit that this is a very good example, but there are others as good.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSE.

Frank Leigh, his brother and his friends were met

One evening at the inn of Bideford Town.
A farewell feast he gave them; but he saw
That merriment was lacking, that each man
Looked deadly on his neighbour, tried in vain
To disregard the feelings of his heart
(Feelings of anger and of jealousy).
Said Frank, "My friends, the love of this fair Rose
Should bind us all together. Let us, then,
Be brothers for her good, and ever strive
To help her in adversity; be no more
Like children fighting for a toy
When common Love should common Friendship bring. [sic]

MRS. FRANKLIN, in proposing the resolution, said that she could bear testimony to the fact that the Parents' Union Examinations did not produce strain. The examinations were not looked upon as an end in themselves but as intended to encourage children to reproduce work done. The children, too, who had been brought up on books would reproduce quite naturally. They would not say, as a girl did the other day, on leaving school: "Oh, Botany was not a subject for examination mostly taken up in our school."

In a recent lecture, Dr. Gow had quoted as his experience, that many boys just tried to master the minimum of work that would get them through an examination.
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MR. UNDERHILL, in seconding the resolution, considered that an examination was an intellectual stock-taking and, as indicated in the resolution, should be thorough. He had recently been present at an examination in an Elementary School where the H.M. Inspector, by giving general questions, had got answers from quite dull children. He advocated a choice of questions.

He did not quite agree about *no* corrections, which seemed to him rather like stock-taking without a balance sheet. Examinations helped teachers to see their own failures and should be set before the end of the term, that omissions might be repaired. Dr. Temple had said that unexamined knowledge was untrustworthy knowledge.

MISS MASON also considered it well to take stock, but that children brought up on books did not make howlers, and that words spelt wrongly should never be looked at again. Were we not, all of us, persecuted by words we had seen wrongly spelt. Let the teacher make notes from the papers and teach the rule, or spelling of a word, again (by letting the children visualise it) and by giving examples as illustrations. Narration was only for the little children, but she did not think it advisable that children should write all their answers till they were over ten.

MISS MURRAY said that if it were proposed to extend this "common curriculum" to the Elementary Schools, where widening really was needed, the stress laid upon terminal examinations would tempt teachers of very large classes to cram the children. The children in good Secondary Schools probably get good books, but have far too many poor ones given to them by undiscriminating friends.

MISS MASON feared that all classes suffered from an inherited parsimony with regard

to books.

MR. HEADLAM thought that if Miss Mason could persuade parents to buy *books* for their children she would be doing a great service to education.

The question of the amount spent by girls in High Scholso [sic] was raised, and MISS WOLSELY LEWIS quoted from £5 to £6 a year for her girls, and MISS GAVIN £1 to £3.

MR. LOWRY remarked that a wholesome appetite for examinations was quite a new feature, and he could testify to the children's keenness, for he had a small boy of six under
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a House of Education student, who claimed to take his share in them even when not called upon to do so.

MR. COMPTON begged for an extension of time beyond the one minute allowed by the Chairman for each speaker, that he might say a word about examination. He had been travelling all night to get to Ambleside—a journey of 15 hours! He had always been inclined to think that the terminal examinations wasted time and killed work. But examinations carried on in this way were somewhat different, and he thought it should be more clearly explained that this resolution referred to a particular system of education. The fact was, that the whole of education depended on the power of reproduction, and this should therefore be a basis for examinations. He had tried this form of exercise of late with his own boys, and had been astonished at the power shown. He considered that a solution might thus be found for Mrs. Woodhouse's difficulty, because the power of application so produced resulted in a great saving of time, and he should say that the (?) 25 subjects of the Parents' Union programme would, with the right method of instruction, be quite possible. The difference depended on the method. He had always felt that in the ordinary way an average boy paid attention for one-third of the lesson-time. Some years ago, at the Headmasters' Conference, one of the speakers likened education to a pyramid which was broad at the base and gradually decreased. So children should begin with a large number of subjects, and these should be gradually reduced until the time came to be an expert in one subject. Might he say one word on the clamour at the present day for Science? Were we not in danger of neglecting the humanities which give to man, as a human being of two parts, the knowledge of man and of God?

4. The standard of acquirements to be expected from boys of 14 in Latin, and the question whether Greek should, or should not, be begun before that age.

MISS MASON introduced the fourth Resolution—

"That not more than 2½ hours in the first, to go on to 10 hours a week in the fourth, year be devoted to classics, supposing the Lower or Preparatory School stage to last from 10–14,"

by saying: That the question of Greek and Latin is so burning a one that we cannot attempt at this Conference to do more
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than propose a delimitation of time. Classics are apt to absorb one-half, or two-thirds, or three-quarters of the time at disposal, and, as Mr. Morant has wisely put it, we waste a great deal of the children's time in making them "mark time." If, as he suggests, we put on

"pace," we should do more and better work in less time.

MR. LOWRY, in moving the resolution, said that the filching of time on all sides from classical studies had this good result, that classical teachers were realising the necessity of making the most of the fragments that remained, by ensuring fruitful and progressive results: it had not yet, however, led to its necessary corollary—the exaction of a less exalted standard in entrance scholarship examinations. And this worked harm to every sort of boy: the scholar had really progressed too rapidly, and had much "marking of time" to do subsequently, for a clever boy of 12 could easily pass Responsions: the slightly inferior boy had been hurried over far too much ground imperfectly: while for the weakest boys it often meant dislike, dissatisfaction, and despair. He believed that this resolution might be helpful, if it were recognised not as the grudging concession of enemies, who would prefer to give no time at all to classics, but as the proposal of friends anxious to make the study of them vital. He pleaded that, however short a time were allotted to them, part of it might be spent in learning a little very perfectly and accurately, and part quite frankly bestowed on wider and more rapid work, without any insistance on minute accuracy.

MR. CECIL GRANT, in seconding the resolution, said that in moving a delimitation of time he felt he was doing something to increase a knowledge of the classics. He was enthusiastically devoted to the study of classics, but believed that too much time was spent on it. He had found that four hours a week from 12–15, with rather more time the last term, would enable a boy to pass the Senior Oxford. He should be willing to limit the time still further than the delimitation proposed.

MISS MASON quoted from a report which had been sent to her from the Headmaster of St. John's College,
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Newfoundland. He had found, in the case of one boy, enough Greek had been done from October to January to enable him to pass Responsions. In the Parent's Union School, Latin was begun in Class II.

MISS WOLSELY LEWIS taught Latin instead of English grammar to girls of 10 and 11.

MISS MASON told of a linguist she knew of, working to become an interpreter, who studied four languages at a time, giving a quarter of an hour in turn to each.

MR. LOWRY considered that all language was one, and that you could not begin too early to tell a boy about other peoples. He had a favourite—should he call it "heresy"—that Greek should come before Latin—as being a much easier and richer language.

LADY CAMPBELL knew of Hungarian children who learnt four languages without any confusion.

MR. RANNIE asked how the absence of preparation was reconcilable with reliance on books. What was the objection to preparation?

MISS MASON said that when this regulation was introduced into the Parent's Union

scheme, home lessons were a crying evil, especially in day-schools for girls. No doubt it was usually the fault of the girls themselves, but one heard of their working until 10 o'clock at night on their "preparation." The fact of there being no preparation, means more concentrated attention and quicker work, and consequent leisure in day-schools for hobbies and home occupations. In schools where the classics are taken up strenuously, doubtless an hour or more a day is quite necessary for preparation.

MR. COMPTON proposed an amendment to resolution (a) Agenda 3,

"That this Conference approves of frequent tests in all subjects studied once at least in each term, but preferably in connection with every lesson."