

THE ARNPRIOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL 1865-1922 - Continued

"During my last year the Public School pupils so overcrowded the lower flat that we were moved to a frame building, where we occupied a room downstairs; the rest being occupied by a Mr. Neilson, who came from Perth to establish a business as a bookseller". The building referred to is a double frame, one-and-a-half storey tenement on the east side of Harriett Street, about fifty yards north of Victoria. Here the Grammar School occupied the downstairs room on the south side. The lots to the south and east were then vacant, and most of the students came in from Hugh Street.

In speaking of the educational requirements for admission to the Grammar School, Mr. Muir says "The applicants were selected from time to time by a Committee of the School Board, which, it sometimes appeared to me, was guided more by the pedigree of the applicants and the desire to relieve the pressure in the Public School than by the educational qualifications of those applying. In Arithmetic, many of them had not gone as far as Vulgar Fractions, and in English Grammar a number did not know that the verb to be does not always take the same case after it as before it". In conducting these examinations, the questions in Arithmetic were written on the blackboard, and the candidates handed in their solutions as soon as they were worked out on their slates. Slates were also used for the test in writing. In English Grammar, easy sentences were written on the board, and the candidates were required to "parse" the words underlined. In History, Geography and Spelling, the tests were entirely oral. In Reading, passages were selected from the "Fifth Reader" used by the senior pupils in the Public School.

In July 1867 Mr. Muir resigned to study Law; practised Law at Fergus, Ont. for 19 years; in 1889 was made a Queen's Counsel by the Dominion Government; in 1890 went to Calgary, Alberta; has been Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Western Canada College since its incorporation in 1903; has been President of the Alberta Law Society since its incorporation in 1907, and has been honoured with the degree of L.L.B. from the University of Alberta

In August 1920 the Alberta Law Society sent Mr. Muir east to represent its interests at Ottawa, when he took advantage of the occasion to stop off at Arnprior and look up some of his former students. Only half a dozen remain - the rest being scattered to the four quarters of the globe, or having "passed the Great Divide". All were delighted to meet their former Headmaster, and rejoice to know that he enjoys such excellent health - the editor of the Arnprior Chronicle describing him as "A pleasant elderly gentleman with alert eye and quick step". After a lapse of more than half a century, how delightful to return to the scene of one's labours, and then be described as "eighty years young", as Oliver Wendell Holmes so happily expresses it.