

TRAINING THE BLIND.

THE WORK OF THE PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE AT BRANTFORD.

Reports Presented at the Legislature Yesterday—The Past Year's Work at the Institute—Charges that Failed.

Inspector Chamberlain's thirtieth annual report of the Brantford Institution for the Education of the Blind was laid upon the table at the Legislature yesterday. In his introductory remarks the inspector says:—"In submitting the thirtieth annual report of the Institution for the Education of the Blind at Brantford, I wish to correct an erroneous impression which some people seem to have in regard to this school, and which has only been brought to my notice during the past year, namely, that it is an asylum for the care and support of the blind population of the Province who have no home or are unable to support themselves. Now, this is not the case, for it is a school established by the Province for the purpose of giving the blind children of the Province an education, and not for the care of blind adults (congenital born blind cases, or those who have become blind from accident or disease long after childhood). However, a few adult cases, who had been educated in the common schools prior to losing their sight, have been admitted to the institution from time to time for the purpose of learning the method of reading adopted for the blind and also to learn willow and cane work as a means of earning (or partially earning) a livelihood. But this experiment has not proved as successful as anticipated; few of these adults have followed the work of basket-making after leaving the institution, preferring to follow other occupations. I am strongly of the opinion (and have been for some years) that the institution should be entirely devoted to the education of

the blind children, from five to eighteen years of age. If blind adults are to be cared for by the Province a separate department should be provided for them, with such forms of industrial work as they may be able to perform, and with such regulations and management during their stay and as to their stay as the circumstances call for."

A Charge That Failed.

He cites the case, previously made public, in which two adults, one who had received a good common school and the other a college education before becoming blind, were admitted to the institution. They were scone able to read the books for the blind, but "could not, or from dislike would not, take up the willow work." There was nothing else to offer them, and they devoted their time to fault-finding with the discipline and the course of training. They issued a pamphlet challenging the course of study and the management of the school, and made a number of charges. On the instruction of the Provincial Secretary an investigation was made by the inspector, Dr. Mills of the O. A. C. and Dr. Hodgins of the Education Department. The complainants were allowed a solicitor, and full latitude in the investigation, the Government bearing all the expense. "After a number of days spent in taking evidence, they utterly failed to show that the management, discipline or course of study pursued from year to year differed from other schools for the blind in Canada or elsewhere, or that the irregularities they complained of existed in the school or had existed at the school in past years to any greater extent than in other schools either for the blind or for children having their eyesight. Their representations were not sustained, conflicting as they did with the testimony of the most eminent teachers of the blind in this and other countries."

The total attendance for the year was 138, the average attendance 118, 61 boys and 75 girls, as compared with 126 in 1900. The average cost per pupil was \$277.75, the amount appropriated was \$32,782, and the inspector suggests the appropriation of \$31,835 for the current year. Reports of the Principal and the doctor of the institution are given, and a table showing from what localities the pupils come.