

REFORM.

Three years will elapse before the next convention of our fine Association will take place at Niagara Falls. What will our branches do until then?

This is, for all members having at heart the progress of the Association, a serious question which deserves the greatest consideration. There will be perhaps some among our brothers who will be tempted to answer that it is useless to brother ahead of reforms to be perfected, of modifications to be made, of superintendence to be exercised in the management, etc., etc., as we have just terminated an efficient work at the recent convention in Quebec, wherein some three hundred delegates have taken an active part, by devoting themselves exclusively to the interests of the C. M. B. A.

This is an error which must be combated, for three years represent but seventy two regular meetings (when they can be held) and if it is asked, who are those who take part in the meetings? what are the subjects which are debated therein? to what does the work come to? we come to the conclusion that it would be far better to go to work immediately, to remedy, by some wise and efficacious means, the increase of an Association composed of members of a superior class, than to remain in the most complete indolence.

We would suggest that the officers of the Grand Council should, during the course of the year, visit the branches and encourage the members, that they busy themselves improving the constitution and our scale of assessment, etc., etc.

For the members of the Provinces more lucky than the Province of Quebec was at the last convention in the election of officers, it will be easy to find a solution to our questions, for the controlling element in that circumstance seem to make all sentiment of fraternity disappear, principally when it is question to render a tribute of recognition to those members who are not in the majority, and who however can show to their assets a thousand and one proofs of their entire devotion and who have made great sacrifices for the greatest good of all.

It would be equally opportune for the branches to see that a competent delegate be selected among those members who attend frequently the meetings, in order to defend the amendments they wish to see adopted or, as the case may be, oppose those they wish to see rejected. We have found out that various important discussions come up at a moment when delegates, very little anxious of the result, would leave the hall during the debates, and the vote being called on a motion more or less favorable, it was carried unanimously, for the excellent reason that those who had at heart to see it carried remained in their seats, following with their eyes those poor deserting delegates.

Inquire from the latter why they did not oppose such or such motion? Well! They will answer you, that a long discussion arose, that they left the hall thinking the vote would not be called before sometime, and unfortunately on their return, everything was ended and even another subject was under discussion. Such is, for some delegates, the report they must have made to their branches.

Now let us recall a small paragraph which was already published in THE CANADIAN and wherein allusion was made to the reading of a few sections

of the constitution at every regular meeting by the Recording Secretary, so as to discuss the interpretation of our by laws. This suggestion should be put into practice, for it is an excellent means for our members to know well their constitution, and we could take advantage of the occasion to suggest any amendments likely to benefit the whole Association by the fruit of a work which may appear slow but in itself would not fail to produce one of the most satisfactory results for the working of our next convention.

J. ADELARD DEMERS.

THE LOVELY MAGDALENS.

The Magdalen Islands, where Rev. Father Burke, Provincial Grand Deputy for Prince Edward Island and one of the best friends of our grand institution in Canada, established Branch 294, of this jurisdiction just before the last Convention, cannot be surpassed, it appears, from the laudatory articles appearing in the daily press of the Maritime Provinces and illustrated magazine articles, as a charming summer watering place. This group of islands, inhabited by the descendants of refugee Acadians at the French Deportation, is completely isolated in the great Gulf of St. Lawrence, some sixty-five or seventy miles north of the nearest point in beautiful Prince Edward Island. Those islands are all fertile and connected by hard, clean, sandy beaches, which lend themselves splendidly to salt water bathing. Far out into the northern gulf the water of the Isles is brinier, clearer, cleaner, cooler, more bracing and health-giving than the other nearer places. This spot, too, is thoroughly secluded, and one can have that complete rest which is so grateful after a year's hack and worry in the business centres of the continent. There can be no doubt but ultimately thousands will frequent those lovely islands in summer for health and repose, and find both abundantly. We hope that the planting of our grand Association there may make them better known, and that those of us who can afford the time and means to visit them will do so much more cheerfully and readily, now that we have so strong an interest in their welfare.

The Magdalens belong to the Province of Quebec, although much nearer to P. E. I. or N. S. But they are ecclesiastically under the jurisdiction of Bishop McDonald, of Prince Edward Island. Their priests then belong to the ranks of the learned and pious clergy of Charlottetown diocese, and they are all fast friends and admirers of the C. M. B. A. Our Grand President has just named Rev. J. A. H. Blaquiere—a name every Irishman acquainted with the history of his country just before the basely-brought about union will recognize with pride—Grand Deputy for the Magdalens. There are three flourishing parishes down there and three clergymen. The population is about 5,000 souls, nearly all Catholic, and all prospering. The new branch started out with 20 charter members, and has since increased them considerably. There will be a branch in each parish before the snow flies.

The Rev. Dr. Chaisson, who accompanied Father Burke to the Islands, and so materially assisted him in the important work in hand, was once stationed there. He is an ardent C. M. B. A.er himself and Chancellor of Branch 294. Adding his zeal and enthusiasm to that of the Provincial

Deputy, it is no wonder that we have glowing reports of the brilliant organization ceremonies from those who joined it at House Harbor, Father Blaquiere's fine parish. All the important men of the congregation went in most gladly, and the branch has in its officiality the Prefect of the Isles, the leading merchantile and commercial men and two clergymen.

You reach the Magdalens by the weekly steamer St. Oaf, either from Pictou, N. S., Georgetown, P. E. I., or Souris, P. E. I. The voyage is most enchanting along the coast of those delightful provinces by the sea. It entails one night out, but the steamer is comfortable and her officers most attentive. We only hope that we may be able to take it in this coming season, thus seeing something of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, charming Prince Edward Island and resting among the beauties of those northern fairy Isles.

From a series of admirable sketches as is admirable everything from his facile pen, written by Rev. Father Burke shortly after his return for the leading daily of his province, the Charlottetown Examiner, we make the following excerpts at random, knowing that they will be read by our members everywhere with pleasure and profit.

Just at this season of the year (Father Burke wrote in the month of July last) no more enjoyable outing could be planned than a trip to the Islands to the north of us known as The Magdalens. Many a time had we heard of those Islands when a youngster in the East as about the last place on earth to be selected for a summer resort. Cold, bleak, barren, impoverished rocks they were designated, upon which a certain class of human beings dragged out a miserable existence simply because they could not get off them; or because there a favorable situation was afforded for the prosecution of fishing operations to which some must certainly devote their lives. To the young Catholic cleric, too, they have even been held up as a terrible place of exile, well calculated to bring out the most Apostolic virtues or serve as a sort of Limbo for the expiation of almost any ecclesiastical indiscretion. Occasionally some stray votary of pleasure has come back to the world from this out of the way Canadian archipelago and raved about its beauty and the real pleasures there to be enjoyed in summer; but 'twas there were to give the story credence. The victim of such false impressions—and how many of them always beset us—what was our surprise and delight, when business and a needed change of air conspired to bring us to the Magdalens, a few weeks ago, to find a place of such beauty and charm and repose as would defy the pen of a poet or the brush of a painter to accurately depict. Here we have everything that goes to make the perfect scene—blue sky, green bounding wave, high, grey, blue and red cliff laved by white breakers, interchanging regularly, verdant meadows and gently ascending mountains, equally verdant to the very summits and dotted over with herds of sleek kine, cosy, comfortable and always well lit and cottages, surrounded by gardens, stretching in an almost unbroken line from end to end of the Island; great and small factories perched upon some convenient cliff or grouped systematically upon the great fishing outposts of Entry, Grand Entry, Byron Islands, countless white winged clipper fishing smacks career-ing away into the distance, until they

are no larger to the eye than the milk white gannet with its tipped wings and eagle men which over bears them company, the almost extinct plucky, which to the uninitiated is presented as reverable, the more pretentious coaster; the graceful, fleet and wondrous "Capo Annen," bearing away seaward after securing the season's bait or riding at anchor in Pleasant Bay, the countless sea birds circling in the circumambient air, gathered in myriads upon the numerous sand bars, swimming stately in the great lagoons or spitting the wave in search of their prey, the round towered light house standing sentinel on every promontory or the more majestic church with its tall, cross crowned spire, ever pointing poor exiled man to his home in heaven, and holding out to him the blessings of the Redemption—all go to make a picture well calculated to charm the eye, and satiate, in so far as natural beauty can, the human soul itself.

The average Magdalener is born, lives out a lengthy existence, and sinks into an honored and hallowed grave, without feeling any more than the outlines of the great world about him in a dim glimpse of Cape Breton or Prince Edward Island, taken from the highest peak of his native hills, or, nearer, from the deck of his staunch fishing smack as he tempts farther and farther the wave in pursuit of his busy plunder. The stately steamer comes and goes on her weekly visitation, is perfected from the old Albert to the Beaver, and from the Beaver to the St. Oaf, and is still quite susceptible of perfection, but her shrill whistle awakens in the breasts of this contented fisher community no burning desire to relinquish comfortable and happy homes to seek fortunes or shipwreck fortune, on the continent. To own a few acres of land and a snug cottage; to command with more pride than a Dewey or a Sampson one of the clipper fishing boats of the great Magdalen fleet, to bestow a tender care upon aged parents; to love and cherish a devoted helpmate, to provide for a numerous and promising family of children, and bring them up in the fear and love of God, to live at peace with his Creator, whose omnipresence is nowhere so recognizable, and to enjoy the respect of his neighbor—a man like himself in blood, creed and aspiration—such is the only ambition of the valiant Magdalener. But it must not be supposed, for a moment, that he is wanting in public spirit, or ignorant or illiterate, or ready to be victimized by the sharper. The picture which Longfellow has left us of the community life of the peasants of Grand Pré might well reflect that of this community of Acadian fisher folk.

'Alike they were free from
Fear that reigns with the tyrant and envy,
The vice of republics
Neither locks had they to their doors nor
Bars to their windows.
But their dwellings were open as day, and
The hearts of their owners;
Then the richest was poor, and the poorest
lived in abundance.'

And, after all, who would want to exchange a life like this for the tinsel attractions of fame and riches, which in every case increase our cares and worries, and rob us of most of the natural pleasures which fill up the cup of the poor man's happiness? The Magdalener may not hope to lead great armies to slaughter, to speak to listening senates, to operate grand commercial enterprises, to be the leader of an often corrupt and corrupting society,