

## THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

QUEBEC, OCTOBER, 1873.

### Conference of the Inspectors of Schools of the Province of Quebec.

In obedience to the summons of the Honorable the Minister of Public Instruction, the Inspectors of the Common Schools of this Province assembled, on the 19th August last, in the large hall of the Laval Normal School. The objects of this conference were to enable the Inspectors to compare and discuss among themselves the results of their experience with respect to the practical operation of the School Laws, and to obtain their united suggestions as to amendments which it might be expedient to propose to the Legislature in order to provide more efficiently for points of detail which the laws may have failed to cover sufficiently, or of which the social and educational progress of the Province in the past twenty years may have shewn the necessity for change or modification. Twenty-four of the twenty-eight gentlemen, charged with the duties of Inspection in the upwards of 800 school municipalities into which the settled parts of this Province are divided, appeared at the conference, which continued three days and was attended by the Hon. the Minister, and the two Secretaries of the Department, of Public Instruction; four Inspectors were unable to come to the meeting. When it is considered that, since the time when the system of Inspection was introduced, about 300 new School Municipalities have been created, that the number of Institutions has increased from about 2,300 to upwards of 4000, the attending scholars from 100,000 to more than 200,000, and that the total amount of pecuniary contributions for educational purposes has been augmented from about \$166,000 to nearly \$1,000 000, it will readily be comprehended that the meeting together of the members of a body of officials,—isolated from each other since 1852, and scattered throughout the Province, with little or no opportunity of communication with each other, for sympathy, or mutual encouragement in the discharge of their onerous and important duties in connection with public education in this country,—could not but be attended with the most valuable results in view of supplementing existing defects in our system and of securing accelerated educational progress in the future.

At the conference, the School Acts were considered and discussed, clause by clause, and notes taken of whatever seemed to be worthy of further consideration, and of suggestions, which, when incorporated in existing statutes, may tend to perfect the practical operation of the Laws of Public Education. In the past, vacancies in the office of School Inspector have been filled up by the appointment of discreet, experienced and successful public school teachers—at least such has been the general rule followed; and the consequence is that it would be impossible to find in the country a body of men better fitted for the discharge of their important duties. Their late conference was characterized by an earnest and painstaking exposition of the details of varied experience which shewed that the Inspectors appreciated the unprecedented opportunity of usefulness thus afforded them, and that they were resolved it should be fruitful of useful results so far as they individually and collectively were concerned.

Before they departed for their respective districts of Inspection an excellent photographic picture was taken, which included, in the foreground, likenesses of former

Superintendents of Education—Dr. Meilleur and the Hon. M. Chauveau—also of the Hon. M. Ouimet, the present Minister of Public Instruction, of Doctors Giard and Miles, his departmental Deputies, and of Mr. Louis Lefebvre of the Education Department, who acted as Secretary to the Meeting. The Inspectors also presented a collective address to the Hon. Mr. Ouimet, of which with his reply, we give a translation below. The following are the names of the Inspectors who were at the conference:

Messrs. P. Hubert, F. H. Valade, J. N. A. Archambault, Césaire Germain, W. J. Alexander, Ed. Carrier, V. Martin, J. A. McLoughlin, J. B. Delage, Bolton McGrath, Chas. B. Rouleau, M. T. Stenson, Geo. Tanguay, P. F. Béland, Rev. M.M. Fothergill, S. Boivin, A. D. Dorval, William Thompson, F. E. Juneau, H. Hubbard, Ludger Lussier, M. Caron, L. M. Laplante, and L. Grondin.

Ministry of Public Instruction,  
Quebec, August 21, 1873.

The Hon. GÉDÉON OUIMET,

Minister of Public Instruction, &c., &c.

Sir,

The happy idea of convening a meeting of the School Inspectors of the Province, at the outset of your career as Minister of Public Instruction, affords us the agreeable opportunity of becoming individually and collectively acquainted with you.

As Head of the Department of Education, you are virtually Chief-of-Inspection, and we feel honored in being your Deputies for the actual inspection of the schools under control, and so consider it our duty to tender you the expression of our sincere respect and warm congratulations.

In the year 1852, almost a quarter of a century ago, the system of school inspection in operation to-day, only on a larger scale, was inaugurated. Of the twenty-three or twenty-four Inspectors then appointed only seven or eight remain in harness,—of the others, many have died and some have resigned.

The Inspectors were, at first, under the able direction of the first Superintendent of Education, the venerable Dr. Meilleur, who, by his talents, amenity of character, and devotedness, rendered such valuable and enduring services to the country, as have earned for him a distinguished place among the benefactors of the Province. Dr. Meilleur was the founder and organizer of our system of education,—a difficult task, since he had to act not only as Commander-in-Chief but even as pioneer,—at the expense of health and ease he cleared the land and left the soil ready for the seed.

On Dr. Meilleur's successor, the Hon. Mr. Chauveau, devolved the task of sowing the seed, and if he had not the pleasure of garnering the harvest he saw it mature promisingly. Mr. Chauveau's natural talent, keen intellect literary tastes, and studious habits particularly adapted him for Superintendent of Education, and in the state of Education to-day in our Province, we see the results of his labours and the wisdom of his appointment.

The task, which falls to your lot, Sir, is to continue and perfect the work of your two able predecessors. The task is not a light one, on the contrary it is one carrying with it responsibilities,—the gravity of which you recognized and acknowledged on a recent occasion,—but from which you shrank not when duty bade you answer the call of the Lieutenant-Governor to accept the post of Minister of Public Instruction as well as that of Premier. Your acknowledged business talent, frankness, and promptness, besides your many excellent private qualities of head and heart, are ample guarantees that you will not only gain the esteem and respect of your fellow-labourers and assistants, but that you will discharge the onerous and important duties of Chief of the Department of Education with credit to yourself, advantage to the country, and satisfaction to the well wishers to the cause of education.

With the best intentions and efforts on our part to carry out your instructions, no doubt, Sir, we shall often find ourselves under the necessity of claiming your forbearance, if not your indulgence.

The Minister replied as follows:—

Messieurs, the Inspectors of Schools in Conference assembled;  
Gentlemen,

Once more do I feel called upon to repeat my words upon a former occasion, that is, that I have accepted the position of