

To students of French origin desirous of improving themselves in the study of the English language, the English Journal will be of the greatest utility, and *vice versa*.

As these two papers will contain selections from the best periodicals published in England, France and the United States, those who wish to obtain a thorough knowledge of every thing relating to education, will find in them two sources of information and instruction which it will be all important to unite.

The second measure, is the establishment of a superannuated teachers' fund. You will receive with this circular the regulations framed for its formation and management, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the twenty-second of December last. Blank forms of requisitions for inscription on the register for teachers actually teaching, and also forms of memorials for pension, have been sent to the school Inspectors and school Commissioners, and they will also be sent to any one applying for them. They contain the regulations and the forms of all the certificates required.

Teachers should not allow this year to go by without inscribing their names and paying the premium of one pound currency, as by so doing they will, when the amount of their pension is fixed, lose the privilege of bringing into account all the years previously passed in teaching. The article of the regulations which leaves it to their option either to pay the premiums for the previous years, or to leave the amount to be deducted out of the first year's pension paid to them, offers an advantage of which they would do well to avail themselves, as it can only be obtained by causing their names to be inscribed during the present year.

The *maximum* amount of any pension will be one pound ten shillings currency per annum for every year during which the applicant shall have been a teacher. Thus, a teacher who shall have taught during five years, shall cause his name to be inscribed at once, and who shall regularly pay the annual premium of one pound during five years, will on becoming infirm, receive a pension of fifteen pounds per annum. It is however to be understood that this amount may possibly be reduced, according to the amount of premiums paid in, and the number of pensions to be paid. In the case just supposed, if the teacher had not paid his premiums for the five previous years when his name was inscribed, viz. five pounds, that amount will be deducted from his first year's pension, which will still leave him ten pounds for that year. At the expiration of ten years, if he live so long, for five pounds which he will have paid, he will receive one hundred and forty-five pounds. Supposing even that the state of the pension fund should be such as to prevent his receiving the *maximum* amount of pension, it is scarcely probable that it will be ever so low as to reduce it below a half; even if such were the case, the teacher would receive seventy-two pounds ten shillings for the five pounds paid for premiums.

It is expected that the annual grant of five hundred pounds, deducted for this purpose from the common school fund, and the amount of premiums annually paid in, will suffice to meet all the demands for pensions. If, however, it should be otherwise, there is every reason to believe that the Legislature will increase the grant, as was the case in Upper Canada, provided that teachers shew any inclination to avail themselves of a measure fraught with so many advantages to them and their families.

In institutions of this kind, the pleasure of doing good, is united with the hope of alleviating our own distress at some future period. While the heart expands with the thought of the succour which we extend to veterans in our own profession, the mind is fortified by the assurance we feel of a provision for our future; and when later we take our share out of the common fund, we receive it, not with the sense of humiliation always accompanying almsgiving, but with the noble pride felt by those who feel conscious of having in happier days, performed a duty at the expense of a few transient pleasures. It is thus that charity when guided by the hand of prudence, smooths down the inequalities of fortune; and if it intrenches a little upon our gains during our years of manly vigor and activity, it is only to restore it by contributing more largely for our comfort and support when overtaken by a sorrowful and decrepit old age.

The peculiar position of teachers, renders it more difficult for them to make this sacrifice than for any other class. It has in fact called forth the sympathy of the public to such an extent, in almost every country, that, besides the grants made by their respective governments in aid of their savings banks, every means that charity could suggest, such as subscriptions, bazars and donations, have been resorted to, to add to this fund. Here, where the public mind is so easily awakened to acts of benevolence, it would suffice, I should say, only to call their attention to the subject, to produce the like results. All the money sent for this object to this office, will be most thankfully received, and a regular account of it given in the *Lower Canada Journal of Education*.

Inspectors and Commissioners should take every means of promulgating the regulations and of persuading teachers to conform to them. They should, above all things, bear in mind that those teachers who contribute to the pension fund, will thereby find themselves obliged to continue teaching; and that one of the greatest inconveniences arising out of the present state of things, is the small number of teachers who embrace that profession with any serious idea of permanently remaining school-masters.

The sympathy they should feel for old retired teachers residing in their neighbourhood, should engage the commissioners to make known to them any thing which may concern their welfare, and to impress upon them that all applications for pensions for this year, must be addressed to the Superintendent before the first of April next.

The Law having required that all teachers should be provided with diplomas, it was impossible to permit those whom the commissioners may persist in retaining illegally, to inscribe their names in the register. This, however, in no wise affects teachers actually retired. These may make their applications for pension without being so provided; but it was deemed more prudent to limit the pension to such teachers only, who had taught for two years since 1848, and for five years altogether; otherwise the fund would find itself burthened with pensions to teachers who had taught but for a short period, and at a time when the schools had not been regularly organised. It was also considered expedient to deduct the premiums for passed years, from the amount of the first year's pension.

There is one provision of the regulations to which I particularly wish to draw the attention of teachers actually employed. It is the one which permits, in case they should die without having drawn anything from the fund, the reimbursement of the full amount of the premiums paid in, with interest from the date of each payment, to their widows and children. It must be some consolation for them to remember, that at any rate, the money they will have paid in, will not be lost, and that the regulation contains a policy of insurance and an annuity combined.

It is then easy for you to perceive that the savings bank is one of the best methods possible of securing for our children the services of competent masters, for the training of whom the normal schools will now very soon be organised.

These institutions, which have been established in Europe, and generally throughout this continent, have with us been the subject of serious apprehensions which have retarded their formation until the present time. With one exception, all the objections raised against them have been overcome by the precautions taken that religion and morals, far from having any thing to fear from the establishment of normal schools, will have every thing to gain thereby.

The only objection remaining, the greater number of you will be able to set aside. A great cry has been raised against the lowliness or rather the insufficiency of the salaries paid to teachers. It has been foretold that this obstacle will cause the failure of our normal schools, and that no one will attend there, laboriously to acquire the right of being poor and despised all his life. Will the school commissioners allow such a reproach to be made deservedly? Will they leave those to penury, to whom they have confided the future of their children? Will they do this, when the laws now in force give them the means of obtaining sufficient funds, by increasing the annual assessment, and by obliging them to collect the monthly fees? If I may judge by the progress made this year, by the increase in the amount of the annual assessment in almost all the municipalities that have sent in their semi-annual reports—by the promptitude with which in a great number of places, the clause providing for the collection of the monthly fees, has been obeyed, I cannot but hope that next year, a more considerable increase in the salaries of teachers will take place, than that which I have remarked with so much pleasure this year. Several teachers receive one hundred pounds and more, besides lodging: salaries of seventy-five pounds are not uncommon, and there are now but few schools in which a competent teacher receives less than from fifty to sixty pounds. These salaries are still far from being as high as they should be, suitably to remunerate good school masters and mistresses; but progress is evident, and there are two causes which should both continue and press it forward. The first is, that the Legislature in their last session passed a law compelling school mistresses to obtain diplomas before the first of July next. Competent school masters and school mistresses will thus find themselves freed from the competition of incompetent teachers, who offering their services at a low price are still paid too high for them, besides, as the Normal school will furnish good teachers, there will be no longer any excuse for refusing them a fair remuneration, and further, the rivalry that will exist among the different municipalities to obtain their services ought naturally to lead to the same result.