

shows them that their success depends, in a great measure, upon themselves, shows them their duty to their children and teacher, thus convincing them of what they could never see before; the teacher is helped on his way, the parents go home with new ideas and strong resolves, while the children are revived and cheered, having measured off part of the year by one session, they make a vivid start in preparation for the next field day. Now this argues a point previously mentioned, viz: who is fit for the duties of Local Superintendent, and who is not; the press has given space to debate this subject before, some assuming one ground and some another. Whilst others, with much warmth and perhaps self-interest, denounce all "black coats" as necessarily unfit; now I take neutral ground, but hold to the fact that no man who has never taught nor learnt by experience the daily and quarterly working, changes and classification of a country school can do justice to the teachers' school or children; I care not what his educational or natural accomplishments may be.

There is nothing personal in these remarks; while McGillivray may be blessed with an efficient functionary at present, I do not think it was ever wantonly neglected nor ruled by a tyrant.

A TEACHER.

[The Chief Superintendent has recommended that suitable provision be made in the new amendment Act to make teachers to visit each others' schools.—ED. OF JOURNAL.]

VI. Meeting of Teachers' Conventions.

1. LOWER CANADA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION.

Negotiations having been for some time pending between Local Associations of Protestant Teachers in this province, respecting the formation of a Provincial Association, it was thought advisable to hold a general convention of Teachers, for the purpose of finally revising the "Proposed Constitution" of the Association, and organizing upon that basis. Accordingly a meeting of Teachers from different sections of the province, summoned by circulars widely distributed, took place in the Hall of the McGill Normal School, Montreal, on the 4th and 5th ult.

The proceedings of the first meeting held on the evening of Friday were of a preliminary character, the public being invited to listen to addresses from several gentlemen intimately associated with education in Lower Canada. Dr. Dawson, principal of McGill College, in the absence of the Honorable the Superintendent of Education, took the chair, and after a prayer by Rev. Mr. Ewing and singing by pupils of the McGill Normal School under the direction of Mr. Fowler, said:—We open this, the second convention of teachers in connection with this Association, under favorable auspices. We have not only a large attendance of teachers and friends of education from Montreal, but representatives of the other Associations in Lower Canada, so that we may hope to inaugurate on this occasion a Provincial Association of teachers in which this and other Associations shall be united on equal terms, and shall hold still larger and more successful conventions, in succession in all the more important places in Lower Canada. Should it be so, this meeting will be an important one in the history of education in Lower Canada, to be looked back upon with interest and respect by our successors in times when we hope the education of this country will have attained a far higher position than that which it now occupies. That we may make this meeting worthy of the high objects we have in view, it becomes us to withdraw our minds as far as possible from our own little special spheres, and to consider ourselves members of a general educational body, all of whose parts work together for a great common end, one of the greatest which it is given to man to promote. Let us leave behind us all our little personal interests, jealousies, and grievances as unworthy of this occasion; and let us consider ourselves as educational missionaries, bound to endure hardness, if need be, in furtherance of the great work of education. Let us bear in mind also that our function is not so much negative as positive; that we are not so much to fight against the evils that affect education, however much they may annoy and injure us, as to prepare for a better future by sowing the seeds of good that shall in time counteract the evil. This is a somewhat obscure and quiet work when compared with that of the soldier and the political reformer, but it is a work that more thoroughly and effectually moulds the form and destinies of society. Let us then meet here in a spirit of love to one another and to all mankind, in a spirit of humble dependence on God's blessing in a spirit of large and liberal self-sacrifice on behalf of the great work of education, and let us consider not so much the petty difficulties that beset us as the sphere for exertion that lies above them in what we can do to make our work efficient for greater and for positive good.

Mr. Laing of the Waterloo Academy, and president of the Bed-

ford Teachers' Association, then read a paper on some of the more common errors of our system of school education. In pointing out some of the errors and short-comings of the teacher he strongly commented on the necessity of goodness of heart and high moral principle as an indispensable qualification for his office, animadverting on the folly, so prevalent in the community, of setting great intellectual endowments above excellence of character; he shewed the utility of maps, models, and pictures, as tending to impart precise and distinct ideas; he alluded to the mischief done by allowing pupils to pass too hastily from the more elementary to the higher branches, and by stimulating unduly the mental development of precocious children; and further he shewed the folly of attempting to govern a school by a code of penal enactments laid down beforehand which must either be carried out irrespective of the injustice inevitable when circumstances are not taken into account, or which must be subsequently partially or wholly repealed, to the humiliation of the teacher, and to the diminution of the respect due to law.

He then proceeded to pass some severe strictures on the short comings of parents, remarking that parents too frequently misunderstood the nature of education, regarding it as a preparation for some particular business or profession rather than for any and every station, and so thought a liberal education thrown away upon farmers; that they were too parsimonious in their school expenditures, the teacher ill paid, and the pupils ill provided with necessary books; that they send their children to school to get rid of them; and that with criminal indifference they allow the education of their children to proceed without their knowledge or supervision. After a few observations on the necessity of a higher standard of education for teachers, he concluded by saying that though all material progress might be achieved by the cultivated intellect, yet there could be no permanent prosperity without virtue. It is not the legislature that frames the laws, nor the executive that administers them, that controls the destinies of a country. It is a power further back and greater, a power that makes rulers what they are—it is the educators of youth. If we would have our country in its manhood that for which we hope and pray, let us see that the sources of its youth are pure and healthy. The children of the present are to be the men of the future. The responsibility is ours. Let us then in the fear of God as we love our country, as we hold its welfare and its honour dear, train up its youth physically, mentally, and morally, to the full stature of perfect manhood.

The meeting was then addressed by Mr. Hubbard, inspector of schools for the district of St. Francis, who being unexpectedly called upon in the absence of Dr. Nicolls, president of the St. Francis Association, made a few remarks touching upon points referred to by the previous speakers. He admitted the grave causes of failure that the last speaker had charged against parents, but would with the chairman insist on the imperative duty of the teacher to do his part faithfully without too much reference to the short comings and wrong-doing of others. He specified as a matter of regret the too frequent change of teachers, alluded to the efforts made in the establishment and maintenance of the St. Francis Teachers' Association, and concluded by hoping that he should see the formation of a Provincial Association which must in his opinion be productive of incalculable good.

Prof. Robins being then called upon by the chairman, welcomed the strangers present on behalf of the Montreal Association, referred to the difficulties that had to be surmounted in order to the accomplishment of the undertaking upon which they had entered, and concluded by saying that much labour and thought had been expended upon this organization and he doubted not of its triumphant success.

Mr. Bruce then read by permission a paper on the benefits to be derived from Teachers' Associations, detailing with much ability and at great length the advantages which they offered to the teacher for the development of his capacities and the elevation of his position. He entered minutely into details respecting such organizations in Europe; and trusting, he said, that a similar organization would be formed in this province, he believed that its formation would be looked upon as a distinguished epoch in the history of education in Lower Canada.

The proposed Constitution of the Association was then submitted to discussion, and after some slight changes was adopted.

It provides that the Association shall consist of the members of all Local Associations of Protestant Teachers in Lower Canada, and that Teachers out of the limits of such Associations shall be admitted members on terms to be hereafter determined; that the Superintendent of Education, members of the Council of Public Instruction, Inspectors of Schools, and members of Boards of Protestant Examiners for Lower Canada shall be *ex-officio* honorary members; that a convention shall be held annually at a time and place assigned at a previous Convention; that a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, shall be chosen at the annual Convention,