

Dominion Educational Association.

The most important educational event of the year was probably the conference of prominent educationists from every province of the Dominion, at Montreal, on the 5th to the 8th July.

The attendance, although not large, was fairly representative of every shade of educational thought in the Dominion. The able lectures, carefully prepared papers and free discussion, of those four days, must have had a beneficial effect in welding the diverse elements of our widely extended young nation, in restraining the intemperate zeal of the enthusiast, and in spurring onward the self-satisfied conservative. Where so much is seen, said and done, it would be impossible to give an account of all that would be interesting to our readers, but we will make notes on several of the leading topics possessing most value at the present stage of our educational progress.

MEETING OF WELCOME.

The addresses of welcome to the teachers by Sir William Dawson, Hon. Mr. Ouimet, Chancellor Heneker, Dr. Adams, Abbe Verreau and Presidents Lacroix and Arthy, were able and enthusiastic. The Act of Confederation left the provinces to grow apart in the separate management of their educational affairs. But it would be the special work of the Dominion Educational Association to bring together the various races, creeds and institutions, and, fusing their best elements, develop that educational and national unity which was needed so much in making us a great nation.

In response Hon. George W. Ross eloquently pleaded for unity, for a broader nationality, and for patriotism that would sweep away all sectionalism. A teacher's qualifications and diplomas should be recognized as of equal value in all the provinces. Text books should not be provincial. There should be but one text book on Canadian History.

Dr. Inch claimed that the Maritime provinces were the Grecian States of the Dominion, supplying men of brains for the larger provinces; for had they not given Sir William Dawson to McGill, Dr. Grant to Queens and Dr. Rand to McAllister?

Dr. MacKay humorously made out many claims of excellence for his native province—the first in the Dominion to receive the rays of the rising sun. Thus reviving the interest of his audience he outlined several national reforms which could be inaugurated successfully only in such a large, representative and authoritative body as the Dominion Educational Association; such reforms for instance as phonetic spelling and shorthand, metric measures, etc.

A conversazione at McGill University occupied the evening very profitably and pleasantly. The repast

was excellent, but better still were the witty speeches by Sir William, Dr. McVicar, Dr. Robbins and Hon. George W. Ross, and the inspection of the magnificent physical, chemical and mechanical laboratories, of the library, and of the Redpath Museum with its "pretty zoological specimens, both dead and animated."

It appears that the observatory of McGill is the only spot in the Dominion whose exact longitude has been determined.

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION.

A very considerable amount of prejudice still exists against high school and academic education. It is, however, rapidly disappearing. That it has not almost wholly disappeared is largely the fault of the high schools themselves. Bound by the traditions of the past they have given undue prominence to classics, theoretical mathematics and the dry technicalities of grammar, geography and history.

When the higher education is made to bear more directly on the occupations of all classes, even colleges need not fear to ask for state aid. They will be absolutely free—even to the extent of supplying free text-books and apparatus.

Dr. Mackay's paper on "The Free Scope and Function of the High School" showed that he is in the van as a progressive educationist. It is necessary for the peace and prosperity of the state that the poor should have free opportunities for a liberal education. The obstacles opposed to their progress develop in many of them an energy that places them among the ruling classes. The state must therefore see that they are properly educated if all classes are to work out with good feeling the development of the social fabric.

The practical value of the experimental study of the laws of Nature can scarcely be overestimated. The moral value of such a study is equally great; for, said the Doctor, "I never knew a true student of nature fascinated by her operations, who was an immoral man." Nature says to all, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." Ought not the students of Nature to realize that truth most vividly.

Another good thought beautifully elaborated by Dr. Mackay was this: Science and Manual Training dignify and invest with a new interest common things and occupations. How rich the life of the intelligent, scientific farmer! If then the schools train for all phases of life, the professions will not be overcrowded, nor will our farmers be leaving the country or dying of ennui.

FREEBEL.

The Kindergartners of the Association were so numerous and ably represented that they had the constitution amended so as to form themselves into a