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TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

TEACHERS' Associations or kindred institutions are not uncommon. Where systems of public schools prevail, if an ambition for elevating and extending such institutions exist, we invariably find them. That Teachers and the friends of Education should unite in Associations and Institutes, is to be expected and, by all means, to be encouraged. The different professions have their Societies, Clubs, and Associations, the aim of which is to watch over the interests of those who compose them, and, when needed, throw the united influence of the whole body around the commonweal. Hence, we have Medical Societies, Law Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Arts' Union, Trades' Associations, and many other societies, the object of which is to watch over the interests of the members, and as far as they have a common claim exercise a fostering supervision. Educators would certainly appear to a disadvantage did they not take a hint from these almost numberless organizations, and unite on some common ground for a common good. Such institutions are a necessity, especially to teachers, who, by their engagements, are so sundered from each other that opportunities for personal interchange of sentiment and views are rare privileges, and who, from being exposed to varied influences and conflicting inducements, are—unless they have some central and recognized organization—sure to be exposed to all the disadvantages of a people aiming to promote common good, by contradictory and conflicting views and efforts.

An association is, therefore, evidently necessary to centralization and unity, in order to promote whatever may relate to the common good of the profession. But on this point—"what is the common good?"—intelligent men may entertain diverse and opposing notions; opinions are formed according to the standpoint whence the view is taken, or different facts may be so presented that men of equal ability for forming a correct judgment may arrive at conclusions widely sundered and even of hostile tendency. Associations bring intelligent men into contact with each other—opinions meet opinion—arguments confront argument—a large amount of knowledge and experience is so brought to view, that the direction in which the commonweal lies is readily discerned, and, when once seen, little effort is needed to prompt the ambitious to certain success. Such advantages result from Teachers Associations, and are motives which urge to form and maintain them with jealous solicitude, as means to a valuable end. But there are dangers, some of which are common to all such bodies—some few peculiar to Educational organizations. Designing and cunning men not unfrequently obtain a footing with the design of using them as the means to gratify personal ambition, though such may be subversive of the very design for which they were formed. The wily, artful politician, or sly and cunning partisan, not unfrequently subordinates to his own base purpose the best efforts of the unsuspecting and confiding, so that valuable energy and capability for good are often perverted. There is much of this in many Associations, as the members of various Clubs have found by bitter experience—where misdirected energy, misapplied influence, and misapprehended worth and zeal have rendered abortive the well-meant labors of societies of honest men.

The teaching staff of a Province like this must necessarily be scattered and in contact with every diversity of character and ambition, acting as disintegrating agencies, with little to abate their forces. If success is contemplated with any degree of certainty at the office, the Association must guard against the danger above suggested, and make escape from such a primary consideration. The purpose for which the Association is organized, and for which the co-operation of its members is invited,

should stand out with all possible distinctness in a well-formed Constitution, so unambiguous and unequivocal as to defy artifice, affording at once protection to the virtuous and a barrier to baffle the artful. The principles and aim of the Association being set forth in a well-digested Constitution, but little difficulty will be found in working out the purpose of the organization; for every member knowing the law will have a keen eye to order and constitutional authority. The Constitution should cover the ground to be cultivated, it should also confine all activities to a legitimate sphere. If such limitations are not sharply and carefully guarded, the presiding officer will find his powers questioned and at times disregarded and defied, and the meeting, instead of being one of order, a scene of perplexing tumult and strife. If officers are to know their duties, and honorably discharge them: if members are to understand their rights and privileges, so as to exercise them; if the Association is to act with a conviction of its own dignity and position, and if the esteem of those without is to be claimed and possessed, then must the Association have a carefully digested code of laws and by-laws, defining and fixing the position and rights of all the members. With such a basis, efficient action is secured, and the fraternal commingling of thought and sympathy with the whole brotherhood. As a result, the best men will gladly accept offices of responsibility, as those of honor, and quickly impress their own intellectual and moral likeness upon the Society they are called to govern. It is presumable that the Teachers of Nova Scotia will place at the head of the Association their best men, among whom not a few may be found fitted for stations of responsibility and honor.

From causes, which we do not care now to consider, the recent Association, at Pictou, did not obtain the measure of success hoped for by those who attended: though, doubtless, the papers, prepared and read by several teachers, had much to commend them to the attention of the thoughtful, and were evidently the results of talent, learning, and experience: but from want of careful pre-arrangement for these productions and a preparation for the business of the meeting, it was obvious that the committee had not acted in concert.

The failure in arrangement, and apparent deficiency in administrative power, to secure order in the time of animated debate, were but the inevitable consequences of a mere nominal constitution.

The Association elected new officers and a new committee of arrangement, and, next summer, will hold its annual meeting in one of the western Counties. Those who know the present officers, are assured that the governmental responsibility is with those who have ability and will, to make the Institution what it ought to be, and, we are sure, what it will be.

Time should not be lost, but, with as little delay as possible, experienced educationists should be invited, and a bill of fare prepared and printed. Three programmes are not needed—one should suffice.

We remember when Dr. Dawson was at the head of our education movement, and the Teachers' Institutes which he held during his visits to the Counties, and the interest thrown into these meetings, as Teachers of experience exhibited their own modes of giving instruction and developed their individual views and convictions on the art of teaching. We remember how Dr. Dawson drew out the opinions of teachers and made their carefully gathered knowledge avail for the good of all present. We now have the impression that some similar exercises would add much to the value of the contemplated convention.

The arrangements are in good hands: and should the Association meet in the centre of those beautiful western Counties, the gathering will be large, and the enjoyment, intellectually and physically, all that the most fastidious could reasonably hope for.