

in the District of St. Francis. The sub-associations, for whose organization the rules of the Associations of Laval and Jacques Cartier provide, have, however, been established but in a very few districts of inspection, and they are not in a very prosperous condition.

If we bear in mind the practical utility of such conferences, and the importance to teachers of refreshing their intellectual and moral powers, adding to their knowledge of the art of teaching, mutually strengthening their endurance by good words, and increasing their aptitude by the many examples the discipline of the Normal and Model schools can offer, in a word, avoiding the routine into which too many are easily led by over confidence in their own abilities, or a relapse into a state of despondency, infinitely worse than routine, we must admit that these associations complete the usefulness of the Normal Schools, and are of an importance only secondary to them. It is, then, with much satisfaction that we are now called upon to notice the successful efforts of the two last associations to secure a large attendance of teachers at the celebration of the fifth anniversary of their foundation; so well attended indeed were these conferences, held in May last at Quebec and Montreal, that they really assumed the character of festivals at which the fraternity had met to commemorate the advance of intellect and of public education. Without dwelling on these proceedings, of which reports will be found elsewhere, we may add that in addition to the pupils of the Normal Schools, there were present at the conferences 45 teachers in Quebec and 76 in Montreal, who participated in many interesting discussions on subjects connected with education, and listened to the lectures and discourses of the most experienced teachers, including the professors of the Normal Schools. The Hon. the Superintendent of Education attended the meetings of both associations, as may be seen by the reports; and we take the liberty of repeating here some words of advice he addressed to the teachers on these occasions. Having congratulated them on the successful development of their associations, he said: In view of the great efforts Government had made to train new teachers, it was only just that it should not have overlooked the old, who had served the country at a time their calling was even less remunerative, and when they enjoyed less protection, than at present. It was this consideration which led to the establishment of the Teachers' Pension Fund, the Journals of Education and the Teachers' Associations; but unless teachers contributed to the support of these three powerful sources of improvement they could not reap the benefits intended for them. With regard to the Teachers' Pension Fund, it had been said that the pensions went on continually diminishing. The reason was quite plain; it was because the number of teachers who had subscribed was too limited. Moreover, some had subscribed who were just on the point of withdrawing from the exercise of their profession; but he (the Superintendent) had, when it was evident that applications were made in accordance with ungenerous calculations, refused the pension and returned the premiums. Sometimes, however, after a subscriber had paid the premium during one

or two years, he had claimed a pension, which, of course, it was impossible to refuse. These were the causes to which the unprosperous condition of the fund must be referred. He (the Superintendent) had often, in his Reports, recommended an increase in the legislative grant for this object; but it was also necessary that teachers should show they were entitled to such a favor; and this they might do by proving they can appreciate what had already been done for their well-being. But some refused to subscribe to the fund, saying they would in all probability never require it. These, no doubt, were very fortunate; yet they might perhaps advantageously yield to philanthropy that which they refused to the dictates of prudence. What better use of their wealth than to relieve the infirmities of their aged fellow-laborers? This was a duty, which in common with all good men, devolved upon them. A fund of this nature was not peculiar to teachers, almost every calling in our cities has its trade-association, maintained in a very flourishing condition by the contributions of its members and without receiving any aid from the Legislature. Teachers, both male and female, who had neglected to subscribe to the fund, almost every day came to solicit, even with tears, a pension that it was not in his power to grant,—that it would be positively unjust to draw from the fund. The unavailing regrets of these poor people should not go unheeded by those who now neglect to subscribe, or who declare they will never stand in need of the benefits it can confer. The Journal of Education, he was happy to say, had received a large accession to the number of its subscribers during the year; still there were many teachers who did not receive it. The School Inspectors had noticed that a marked improvement had taken place in the schools where it was received; and as the subscription was only half-a-dollar, every teacher should take it. The Journal had been rendered as attractive as possible. Apart from practical information in the art of teaching and educational news, its columns always contained abundance of literary, scientific, and other instructive extracts; and as it was devoted exclusively to the interests of teachers, they should certainly maintain it, the more so, as the subscription was almost nominal. It would also be to their advantage to obtain subscriptions among their pupils and friends; for in doing this, they would extend the influence of their profession in the community, which is of the first importance, as it is an acknowledged fact that they and their successors must be the gainers by the diffusion of useful knowledge and the development of a popular taste for polite learning and the sciences. And now a word about teachers' conferences. If teachers themselves did not feel the importance which attached to these professional meetings it were indeed hopeless to expect they would do anything for self-protection—far less for self-improvement. Strange as it might appear, the most indefatigable perseverance had been required on the part of those who had undertaken the management of the teachers' associations to sustain them. But *labor improbus omnia vincit*, and it now appeared as though such praiseworthy efforts were about to meet with a well merited and anxiously hoped-for