

St. Francis District Teachers' Association.

The semi-annual Convention of this Association was held at East Hatley, Province of Quebec, on Friday, July 5th. The attendance was very good, especially at the afternoon session, when a large number were present, chiefly lady-teachers of Common Schools from Hatley and Stanstead. The Association affords to those who have been for some time engaged in the work of teaching, an excellent opportunity to impart instruction to those just entering the profession, and who need advice and encouragement. The meeting was a very pleasant one, and it is hoped very profitable.

The morning session was opened by prayer by Rev. Mr. Lee of Stanstead Academy. Extracts from the minutes of the Annual meeting, which was held in Compton in December last, were read by the Secretary. The President, Principal Graham, then appointed the following Committees: on Business, Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Barland, and J. B. Lebaron, Esq., and on reception of members Rev. Mr. Lee, Mr. Robert Robinson of Coaticook Academy, and Mr. Gale.

The Secretary, Prof. A. Duff, of St. Francis College, read a short report of the business that had been transacted for the Association since December last, and of the finances; also suggesting several subjects for discussion.—The Report is as follows:

REPORT.

We are again assembled to discuss matters pertaining to our Schools and to Education generally, and certainly we have great cause for thankfulness to God for this opportunity, and for the additional time we have been permitted to employ in our important and interesting work.

The minutes of the last meeting were published nearly in full in several of the papers of the Province, and doubtless they did good.

The Hon. J. S. Sanborn was duly notified of the action taken at the annual meeting on matters referred to in his letter then read, and he cheerfully accepted the work of drawing up the memorial as determined. The Committee on the memorial will doubtless report.

Some correspondence has been had with Professor Darey, Secretary of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers, with reference to the time and place of holding the next meeting of that body, but no arrangement has as yet been announced.

Thanks are due to our friend Dr. Gilbert, and to others of this place, for their kind assistance in making preparation for this meeting.

I take the liberty to suggest that there be discussed at this meeting the following subjects:

"H. L. Whitcomb's First Canadian Arithmetic."

"The relative proportions of the work the Teacher should require from his pupils as his unaided effort, and that in which he should help him to understand and learn."

"The best means of securing the interest of Teachers in this Association, both as a means of intercourse with one another, and of improvement."

"The best means of rendering our Academies thoroughly efficient."

The income and expenditure for the past half year have been as follows:

Balance on hand from last year.....	\$1 01
Amount of fees of 13 members.....	3 25
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	\$4 26
Expenditure for advertising, &c.....	4 15
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Balance on hand.....	11

All of which is respectfully submitted.

ARCHIBALD DUFF, JR., M. A.,
Secretary-Treasurer.

This report was referred to the Business Committee for the auditing of the accounts, and for the consideration of the subjects proposed for discussion.

The routine business being completed, the verse, beginning, "Be Thorough, O God, exalted high,"—was sung, and the Association adjourned to reassemble at half past one.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Association came to order at about half past one, and Mr. A. Duff offered prayer.

The President briefly addressed the Convention on the efforts that had been made to improve our general School System, referring to the Order of the Council of Public Instruction on School Books, the state of the Government funds set apart to aid Superior Education, and a more just representation of the Eastern Townships on the Council.

The minutes of the morning session were confirmed. Mr. A. Duff gave a short review of the Primary Arithmetic referred to in the Secretary's report. Some parts of it might be improved, yet in many respects it is an excellent little work.

The President spoke of the importance of Exercise in Mental Arithmetic, and found on inquiry that very many of the Teachers present have classes in this study.

The best method of teaching Fractions was discussed at the request of Mr. Blaylock, who sought information on the subject. Rev. Mr. Lee of Stanstead made some excellent remarks on the means of illustrating the division of the unit, giving also very good advice as to the general work of the Teacher. He must be wide awake, not wearying younger scholars, not giving too much assistance, and never listening to the word 'can't.' Others followed with short addresses. The question was then brought up, "What should be the relative proportion of unaided effort by the Scholar and of help given him by the Teacher?" After some remarks on this subject, applying more especially to teaching geometry, an essay written by Miss Bacon of Hatley, was read by the Secretary. Many important thoughts were presented by the writer, relating to the co-operation of parents and teachers, the duty of the former to keep the physical system of the child in a healthful and vigorous state, and the means of imparting religious instruction in our schools, which are of course entirely undenominational. A vote of thanks to Miss Bacon was passed unanimously.

The President called attention to the renewed offer of prizes by J. H. Pope, Esq., for the best Essays on "Religious Instruction in Common Schools."

Several names were added to the roll at this point in the meeting.

Rev. Mr. Lee and the President then addressed the Association on the question last proposed, urging that principles often need explanation, yet the work of a scholar should never be done for him. The amount of assistance necessary varies in different cases. A large part of a class would be thoroughly discouraged by being thrown entirely on themselves, though a few might become excellent men under such a method.

The increase of interest in the Association was next brought forward for discussion. The President thought that it would be well if there were Teachers' Institutes among us, regular gatherings of Teachers for instruction by some one thoroughly experienced in the work of education. Mr. Lee desired that it were well known that Teachers are not required to make up in extra work time spent at Association Meetings. It was thought by some that it would be well to have more definite arrangement than hitherto for the work of the Conventions. Persons might be appointed several months beforehand, to prepare essays to be read before the Association.

It was requested that the subject, "Government in Schools," be discussed. The President pointed out the importance of thorough order, also the benefit of noticing the good things in a scholar's behaviour, and the care to be taken in administering bodily punishment.

The need of proper apparatus was urged by Mr. Robinson of Coaticook. He found great difficulty in giving instruction in Geography without good maps. He also expressed a wish that our schoolrooms were more attractive. It was suggested by another that the introduction of singing among school exercises would greatly tend to interest the Scholars.

The Association then adjourned till 7 P. M.

The evening session was opened by prayer, by the President. Dr. Gilbert briefly addressed the Association on the duty of parents to train their children to proper habits, and to sustain the Teacher in his work.

The President then made reply to a question which had been sent up to the desk during the afternoon session. He had been asked to give the reason for the rule for Division of Fractions. He explained at considerable length this subject and the method of presenting plainly to a class several other arithmetical questions.

After some discussion it was resolved to hold the next meeting of the Association at Stanstead Plain, and on the suggestion of gentlemen from that vicinity, the following were appointed a Committee of Arrangement: Rev'd. Messrs. Lee and MacDonald, and Messrs. W. B. Colby, David Mansur and H. G. Pierce.

The Secretary was instructed to prepare a report of the proceedings as soon as possible for publication.

On motion, the thanks of the Association were tendered to the Committee of Arrangements and to the people of East Hatley, for their hospitality and kindness in making preparation for the convention; to the office-bearers of the Association; and to the editors of the various newspapers of the Province who very kindly gave notice of this meeting.

A verse of the National Anthem was sung, and Rev'd. Mr. Tomkins pronounced the benediction, after which the Convention separated.—*Exchange.*