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PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION

OF

Protestant Teachers of the Province of Quebec.

REPORT OF THE

EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION.

Held December 27th and 28th, 1871,

AT RICHMOND, P.Q.

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PROTESTANT TEACHERS,

OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

HELD AT RICHMOND, December 27th and 28th, 1871.

Published by order of the Central Executive Committee.

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OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1871-72.

President.

PRINCIPAL DAWSON, LL.D., F. G. S.

Vice-Presidents:

The Presidents of the Local Associations, viz. :

BEDFORD ASSOCIATION,	J. A. McLOUGHLIN, Esq.
MONTREAL “	PROF. MCGREGOR.
QUEBEC “	
ST. FRANCIS “	S. H. SHONYO, M.A.

Secretary:

FRANK W. HICKS, M. A.

Treasurer:

PROF. MCGREGOR, M. A.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

1st. The foregoing Officers.

2nd. The Council of the Teachers' Association in connection with the McGill Normal School, viz:

Vice-Presidents:

PRINCIPAL HICKS,	MRS. J. SCOTT,
FRANK W. HICKS, M. A.	W. G. DEY, M. A.

Council:

MISSSES MURRAY, CAIRNS and DERICK.

MESSRS. KELLEY, CAMERON, REXFORD, and ROWELL.

PRELIMINARY MEETING OF CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Provincial Association was held at the McGill Normal School on the 14th September, 1871, to make arrangements for the approaching Annual Convention.

Present: Prof. McGregor in the chair, Principal Hicks, Messrs. Duval, Rowell, Rexford, and the Secretary.

I. Moved by Principal Hicks, seconded by Mr. ROWELL, "That the report presented by the Secretary be adopted, and that he be authorized to print 300 copies of it." Carried.

II. Moved by Mr. DUVAL, seconded by Mr. REXFORD, "That the next Annual Convention be held at Richmond, P. Q., on the 27th and 28th December next." Carried.

III. The Secretary was authorized to print and circulate 150 circulars referring to the approaching convention.

R E P O R T .

The eighth Annual Convention of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers was held in the St. Francis College, Richmond, P. Q., on the 27th and 28th December, 1871, in accordance with the arrangements made by the C. E. Committee. There were present at the several sessions a large number of teachers from the various Colleges, High

Schools, Academies, and other schools throughout the Province.

The Convention met for its first session at 2 o'clock, P.M., on the 27th December, 1871, the President, Principal Graham, LL.D., in the chair.

After devotional exercises had been conducted by the Rev. Professor MCKAY, the minutes of the last meeting, which had previously been printed and circulated, were, on motion of Mr. Inspector HUBBARD, seconded by Professor MCKAY, adopted.

The Secretary, Mr. FRANK HICKS, M. A., read the following list of subjects for discussion.

- I. Compulsory Education.
- II. On Teaching Composition.
- III. The length of School hours.
- IV. Mixed Schools.
- V. The length of the Midsummer Vacation.
- VI. Principal Hicks's paper on "The teachers' means of professional improvement."
- VII. Rev. Mr. McKay's paper on teaching "Etymology."
- VIII. Mr. Emberson's paper on "Teaching Writing."

The PRESIDENT then rose and said that he was glad to see that so many academies throughout the country were represented. He was also delighted to have with them Hon. Treasurer Robertson. He was also especially pleased that they had with them a representative of one of the leading papers in the Dominion, and he was sure that a new interest would be created in the MONTREAL GAZETTE, which was one of the educational journals of the country. He wished also to convey to Mr. Frank Hicks, his hearty thanks for the manner in which he had transacted the business pertaining to his office. After some further remarks he proceeded with his address. He saw before him, representatives of various sections of the Province, and of various interests, and he might therefore expect that they would take an interest in the subject which he was about to bring before them. This topic was one which it was time for teachers to consider, and the result which he arrived at, he believed it was necessary for them to take action to bring about. The subject which he alluded to was the establishment and perfection of a system of common graded schools. The common school system of this country seemed to have had its birth in the Eastern Townships, whence it had extended to all parts of the country, Ontario included. The inherent excellence of the system, the hearty co-operation of the people, the fostering care of the government in directing it—all had

contributed to make it the means of diffusing a very good elementary education throughout the country. Our system of common schools had, therefore, for these reasons, accomplished much. The teachers of common schools had comprised our best men and best women. Many of our common school teachers had but been fitting themselves for a higher position in the country. Our common schools had occupied a large place in the affections of the people. They had been considered as the colleges of the poorer classes, for they were the only places in which men and women in the lower walks of life could fit themselves for becoming good citizens. We must look upon our common school system as the foundation of our educational success. He thought that they might look upon the common school system as the very basis of our educational system, from which we might expect much more as it was developed and perfected. The establishment of Model Schools had not proved a success. The few established, especially in country places, had not fulfilled the expectations which they had created. In the cities and towns they had, in a measure, proved successful. In referring to our educational facilities, he must not forget to draw attention to our Academies, which had been very extensively adopted throughout the Eastern Townships. These had done a great deal for the country. They had, in fact, done more than could have been expected from them, considering the difficulties under which they labored. Few had ever received any endowments, the teachers having to rely for their support upon tuition fees, and had it not been for Government aid, but little would have been accomplished compared with what had been done. The men and women who had taught Academies had done their work well. But the time had now arrived when it would be impossible for our school system to do as much as it had done in former times; and we ought to consider a system of graded schools as an extension of our common school system. First, there should be the common schools, to be followed by intermediate schools, and afterwards by high schools. In some districts others, perhaps, would require to be added, but generally these would meet the wants of the people. When we considered that much more could not be done under our present school system, although no doubt it was doing as much as it possibly could, it was our duty to endeavor to bring about some improvement. Our present school system was certainly not sufficient to give to the youth of the country that education which they ought to have. It was utterly impossible for a teacher single handed to give instruction in all the branches which he was called upon to teach in order to fit our youth to take the position which they ought to do in the country. Our Model School system being separated from the Common School system, and our Academies being chiefly local, they were not able to do their work efficiently. In every other department of humanity, a proper division of labour was being carried out. For instance, very little could be done in manufactures, if different sets of men and women were not employed in different departments of work. To expect one teacher to give instruction in the whole circle of sciences, and in the elementary branches as well, was to expect from a teacher what he was not able to do, and do well. The graded schools would afford an opportunity of carrying on the work of teaching systematically. They would enable teachers to do their work much more rapidly; and when in these days time was so valuable, and when the work might be done with much less arduous labour, both to pupil and teacher, in less time and more thoroughly, a great advantage would of course be obtained. Not only, too, would the system prove more rapid, easier, and more thorough, but in an economical point of view very much would be gained. The present system afforded no opportunity for classification, which was one of its great deficiencies. As a means of fitting a pupil for the duties of life, as well as for the higher branches of instruction, the graded schools would be found invaluable. It was surprising to many that a greater number of scholars were not prepared for colleges. But Academic teachers knew that, with the duties which they had on their hands, it was impossible for them to fit young men and young women for higher educational institutions. He knew full well, that many teachers, in order

to fit a promising pupil for the college, were obliged to steal hours from their own time, both morning and evening, for that purpose. It seemed to him, therefore, that from these and various other reasons, we could not expect much further improvement in our schools unless something were done to systematize the work. He fully believed that it was the duty of the state to give to every child in the land such an education as would fit him, or her, to perform his or her duties as a good citizen. This he thought was the lowest standard that we could adopt, and that with anything below this, we should fall below the standard of a civilized people. It seemed to him that it was time for them to take upon themselves the task of bringing before the people both in town and country the importance of establishing a system of public graded schools, to a great extent free. A system of graded schools, which would bring the pupil on step by step, would, he was sure, give to the youth of our land the most thorough, rapid, and economical education which it would be possible for him to attain. He fully believed, however, that we were not very much behind other countries, and thought that, very likely, as much might be found fault with in foreign countries, even more favorably situated than our own. One thing which had amazed him in Montreal was, the vast amount of work done by the Commissioners with their limited funds. He was, also, perfectly amazed that they should be able to go on as they did, without a common school Inspector in Montreal. It seemed to him one of the first requisites of the system was the appointment to this place, of a gentleman thoroughly acquainted with the working of the graded school system. In the United States there was scarcely a town which had not a superintendent of schools, who lived entirely upon the salary which he received from his office, and was thus enabled to devote his whole attention to it. His duties were to have a general supervision over the schools, to counsel the teacher, settle all difficulties, etc. All this was quite sufficient to occupy the whole time of an able and active man. He did not, however, in referring to this matter, intend to reflect in any way upon the Commissioners in Montreal. All these things would doubtless come in time; and the country, looking to Montreal for example, would find that it was not behind hand in carrying out the work that had been begun, and would set itself to follow in the footsteps of the city. After all that it was possible for the Minister of Education and his Deputies to do in the line of Supervision, much more was required to be done by Inspectors, and more, by far, under the present system, than under a graded system. He might, if he chose, bring up many other arguments in favour of graded schools and in favour of their early establishment in this country, but he would not weary them. He would urge upon them the importance of an early and united effort, for the perfection of a school system on the excellent basis laid down for them by others who had preceded them. As a citizen, and as one who expected to be a permanent resident of this country, he would endeavour to promote the establishment of such a system of schools as he had described; and it was time for them, as a class, to put forth a united effort for the establishment of a perfected system of public graded schools. The President concluded his remarks amid considerable applause.

MR. INSPECTOR HUBBARD, of Sherbrooke, adduced some facts with respect to the graded system as established at Sherbrooke. The Sherbrooke Academy, which had been in existence for years, had, to a great extent, proved a failure. It was found that it could not be carried on with success under the semi-private and semi-public system which formerly prevailed, and a proposal was made to introduce a system something after the manner of that spoken of by the President. It was arranged that the Academy should be placed under the management of the town Board of School Commissioners, with the view of taking in scholars from the elementary schools in the town and outside who, in the opinion of the managers, had arrived at a sufficient stage of advancement to be admitted to such a school. The scholars were then taken on through the higher branches of education,

the common schools being confined strictly to the common and preliminary branches. It was not at present supposed that things were sufficiently advanced to make the Academy of Sherbrooke a high school, but an intermediate as well as a high school. He thought that in many other parts of the townships the system might be carried on with equal success. So far, a very favorable commencement had been made at Sherbrooke.

Mr. SMITH, Master of the Sherbrooke Academy, said that, as far as the working of the graded system went at Sherbrooke, he found that it was at present in a very imperfect state. Just as had been very well said by the President, the Academy was doing a preliminary as well as an intermediate work. It would be unfair to represent it as a graded school except in a most embryo form, for they had not, as yet, been able to introduce the principle of test examinations. No doubt they should one day be enabled to overcome some of the difficulties under which they laboured. He thoroughly believed in the graded system not only for Sherbrooke, but for every other place where it could be carried out. The Chairman had suggested the best means to bring about the system. Of course it was well understood that the great object of teaching was to make the diffusion of knowledge more extensive, and of systems, to render teaching easier and more practical. In Sherbrooke, he it remembered, fully one half of the population was French, which rendered it impossible to carry on the work with anything like the same facility as could be done in an entirely English town.

M. SHONYO, of Coaticook Academy fully concurred in what had been said relative to graded schools. There had been some action taken in this direction in the Academy to which he belonged. In his connection with academies in this country, which had extended over some ten years, he had always felt that the work was terribly disjointed. He had felt that they were doing the work of a lower grade of Schools, there being no test examinations. Should test examinations be established, however, many of their schools would die. They were forced, therefore, to do the work of low grade schools or to give up altogether. Now, in larger places like Coaticook, they hoped to be able to introduce the graded system. He had found the officers of the municipality ready to co-operate with him in this effort. Should the Government support them, as he had recently been led to understand it would, they hoped soon to have the system in operation. To his mind, the greatest advantage of the graded system was the ambition which it excited in the pupil. When the pupil saw that he had to climb the ladder step by step, when his advancement depended on his own efficiency, he would be incited to further efforts. The community would also be led to take a greater interest in the schools. Now, in many of the academies, the people took very little, if any, interest. He had often made strenuous efforts to awaken interest in his schools, but they had fallen quite flat. In Ontario it was vastly different. So far as he had been able to follow the school system of Ontario, he had found it the best on the continent, the graded system being thoroughly carried out.

The matter was then dropped.

REV. PROFESSOR MACKAY followed with an interesting address on the Greek article, following it in its various changes through several dead and living languages.

PROFESSOR GRAHAM, in remarking upon the address, recommended very strongly to teachers the study of the etymology of words. They would find a spirit and a depth of meaning in words if traced back to their original roots which would be perfectly astonishing. Indeed, he likened the transmigration of words to the transmigration of souls. In some words there was more meaning and knowledge than in whole volumes of history.

And if from the remarks of the learned Professor they should any of them be led to the study of etymology, they would find it a great source of pleasure and instruction. He hoped that in future more attention would be given to this study.

Mr. F. HICKS, Secretary of the Convention, said that in his own school he paid considerable attention to the study of the derivation of words, and the scholars thought the afternoons given to this study the next best thing to half-holidays.

After some remarks by Mr. INSPECTOR HUBBARD,

Mr. EMBERSON, of Bishop's College, said that one point which had not been as yet touched upon in connection with this subject, and which it was important to bring out, was, how, for instance, history, if he might so speak, was preserved by etymology. He showed that the Greek and Roman nations must have sprung from the same source, as many words for common objects were nearly the same in both languages.

The Convention then adjourned until 7.30 o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

The Convention was opened again in the evening at half-past 7 o'clock, with a considerably larger attendance than during the afternoon.

The Chairman remarked that he had received a communication from Hon. Mr. Chauveau, Minister of Public Instruction, to the effect that, owing to great pressure of public business, and to the fact that this was the first anniversary of a very great bereavement in his family, he was unable to be present. Those of his hearers who had been present at the last Convention held at Richmond, would regret this the more, as the presence of the Minister of Education and of several other distinguished gentlemen had added much to the interest of the occasion.

The discussion on the subject of Graded Schools was then resumed.

Mr. SHONYO referred any who wished to inform themselves thoroughly on the Subject to *Wells on Graded Schools* published by S. Bonner, of New-York. An animated discussion ensued, remarks being made by Principal Hicks, Mr. Shonyo, of Coaticook Academy, Mr. Lee, of Stanstead Academy, Inspector Hubbard, Mr. White, of the Montreal High School, Mr. Barwick, of the British and Canadian School, Montreal, and others.

THE TEACHER'S MEANS OF PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT.

PRINCIPAL HICKS, of the McGill Normal School, then read a paper on the "Teacher's Means of Professional Improvement," in which, after speaking of the importance of every teacher trying to fit himself for

his duties, he drew attention, in the first place, to the benefits Normal Schools had conferred upon teachers in preparing them for their work, and the need there was for their endeavouring by all the means in their power to carry on that professional training which it was the province of the Normal School to begin. He then alluded to the value of school conventions as a means of improving the teacher, bore testimony to the good resulting from such meetings in different countries, and instanced the present meeting as calculated to produce beneficial results as far as Canadian teachers were concerned.

He strongly advocated, as one of the best means of professional improvement, the fostering among teachers of such a kindly feeling and *esprit de corps*, that they might be led to frequent interchange of school visitation among themselves for the purpose of mutual instruction in the best methods of school keeping; spoke of the benefits they had derived when a young teacher from witnessing the efforts of others in their daily labours, and the necessity for the cultivation of such intercourse, if teachers were determined not to fall into that apathy, which is generally experienced by all those who exhibit a disinclination to measure themselves with others, working in the same field. He then drew attention to the value of the teacher's obtaining a knowledge of the educational literature of the day, to the advantages to be derived from a study of the characters and systems of great educationists and to the need of the daily reading of educational periodicals, recommending to their notice the Educational Journals of the Province. He, also, drew attention to the study of mental philosophy as a powerful means of professional improvement to the teacher, and quoted a passage from the writings of Dugald Stewart, in which he expresses his conviction, that the teacher will never produce the benefit which might be derived from his labours, until he has taken up, to some extent, the study of a science, the principles of which are connected with the whole work of education. Bearing upon this, he strongly advised all teachers to study in their schoolrooms that, which is generally spoken of as "Child-nature." He spoke of the condition of the child's mind as fitting him for the especial work of the teacher, and the pleasure resulting from a knowledge of mental characteristics which lead so much to the success of those engaged in daily school training. He concluded his paper by calling attention especially, as a means of professional improvement, to the study of the use of language for the purpose of conveying instruction, and of reaching the child's mind; and lastly the cultivation of that teachableness of character which would lead every teacher to seek instruction from all around him, in order that he might fit himself the better for an honourable, but at the same time, a difficult profession.

Mr. HUBBARD could not refrain from expressing his satisfaction with the paper which had just been read, especially with the last portion of it. One of the greatest difficulties which a teacher had to contend with was to convey his meaning to children in words which they could understand.

HON Mr. ROBERTSON said that he had not come there for the purpose of making a speech, but to listen. Since he had been called upon, however, he would say a few words. He had had the opportunity of attending Teachers' Conventions very frequently, and had obtained a great deal of pleasure and profit from them. He thought that our people generally felt too little interest in our common school system. The other day they had an animated discussion in the House of Assembly on the propriety of having School Inspectors. Some people had objected to paying any money for the maintenance of a system of school inspection. But how our school system could be carried on without it he could not see. The Government had however persevered and carried the appropriation for this purpose by a large majority. The want of interest in our schools throughout the country was

very marked. How many people in the country would they find visiting the schools during the year? He ventured to say that many of the schools scarcely had a visitor from year's end to year's end. How could they expect teachers to do their work satisfactorily, when it was a fact that many children were sent to school more for the sake of getting them out of the way than for the sake of any benefit which was likely to accrue to them in after life from their education? He felt that they ought to endeavor to instil into the people a greater sympathy with teachers and their work, than was manifested at present. He would almost go so far as to say that the State should provide that all children in the country should be educated; and it seemed to him that until something was done in this direction our common school system would be defective. He could not expect such results as had been achieved in Ontario and in the States; but by individual effort very much might be done to assist the Government. Rapid advancement had, he thought, been made within the last ten years; and if they could only do something towards educating the people up to a knowledge of the importance of this subject, they would have done a great deal towards furthering the interests of education in this country, and would be helping vastly to the attainment of a perfect end. The subject of education was so large that every point seemed very important. Let any one look back over the last ten or fifteen years and see the number of teachers sent out by the Normal Schools, and he could not fail to see a great progress. A return of the number of Normal School diplomas granted had been recently brought before Parliament; and he was astonished to find that the number was very large and much larger than he had expected. He must say that he thought that the Normal Schools had proved a very great assistance to the Common Schools.

After the singing of a doxology the Convention separated for the night.

SECOND DAY.

The convention was opened on Thursday, at half past 9 A.M. After religious exercises, the members of the Executive Committee present proceeded to arrange a programme for the day.

The first business was the election of officers for the ensuing year, which was at once proceeded with.

The result of the balloting was as follows.

President—PRINCIPAL DAWSON, LL.D.

Secretary—FRANK W. HICKS, M.A.

Treasurer—PROFESSOR MCGREGOR, M.A.

Montreal was then fixed upon as the next place of meeting.

Mr. EMBERSON, of Lennoxville, then read a paper on teaching Spelling and Writing.

He said: You may remember the story of the two officers, in *Punch*. One writing a letter, says to the other, "I say George, how do you spell struggle—one or two g's?" "Spell it with three g's old fellow." Now, this jest gives us the true way to teach spelling, viz., by making the pupil write out each word. The officer who once wrote struggle with three g's would immediately detect his mistake. The fact is, that to teach a boy to spell aloud by no means teaches him to write the word correctly; and I once took a class in spelling, and made them write the words on their slates: 80 per cent were written wrong. On making them spell aloud, hardly any mistakes were made. Now, about once in three months, according to my observation, we are asked the spelling of a word—asked to spell it aloud. On the other hand, most of those here present write some 1,000 words at least a day, or for one half hour at least 30 words a minute. Hence the importance of teaching boys to spell correctly on paper, in writing, and not only, or not at all, by word of mouth. In writing, the main object should not be to write so that you can be read, but so that you cannot possibly be mis-read. There is a French epigram that words are an ingenious discovery made for the purpose of concealing one's thoughts.

To correct this the following rules are suggested:

1. To avoid flourishes, which are as confusing as they are vulgar.
2. To let their m's and n's join at the top and the u's at the bottom.
3. To write their w's like a Greek omega.
4. To be sure their pupils make loops to their e's and dot their i's.
5. To let 7's and 2's have two horns.
6. To write round, text and small hand letters, exactly the same in shape, though different in size.

Mr. WHITE followed with a sketch of the system he pursued in teaching writing in the High School.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

PROFESSOR BERNIER, of St. Francis College, then read a paper in French on the above subject, of which the following is a brief synopsis. He said: The general conclusion as to the origin of progress in humanity has come to be that there is in the mind of man a latent progressive force—a force as mysterious and enigmatic as electricity, vegetation and generation. The mineral progresses into the vegetable, the vegetable into the animal, the animal into man. Man alone requires to be instructed by others. Instruction then is the true civilization. Education teaches self-government. A nation when uneducated breaks out into public crimes just as the uneducated man is almost sure to expose himself to the action of the law. Consider the difference between the nations called savage and those generally esteemed to be civilized. How much nearer the former are to the brute and animal creation! Is it not then the true conclusion to be derived from the foregoing ideas, that the progress of humanity is education, and education the truest progress of humanity?

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the subject of

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

A somewhat protracted debate took place on this subject in which the President, Principal Hicks, Professor Howe,

Hon. Mr. Robertson and others took part. The feeling of the convention was in favor of a compulsory law; but, as there was not time to conclude the discussion, the President announced that the subject would be left open to be discussed at the next annual convention.

Motions of thanks were then passed to the various railroads which had issued tickets at reduced rates to delegates.

A hymn was then sung, and the benediction pronounced, when the convention was adjourned.

