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SOCIETY  
OF  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
—  
REPORT  
OF THE  
SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF CANADA  
FOR THE YEAR 1879.  
  
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C. DARVEAU, PRINTER  
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*REPORT of the Superior Council of Canada to the  
General Council of Paris, for the year 1879.*

QUEBEC, 13TH APRIL, 1880.

As in previous reports we shall consider, in the first place, the conferences of the Province of Quebec; then those of the other Provinces under the jurisdiction of the Superior Council of Canada.

In the Province of Quebec we have 4 particular councils and 46 aggregated conferences. In Ontario there are also 4 particular councils with 21 conferences, forming a total for both Provinces of 8 particular councils and 67 conferences, composed of 3691 active members. Of this number 3010 belong to the conferences of the Province of Quebec and 681 to those of Ontario.

Of the 4 particular councils of the Province of Quebec 2 are in this city, 1 in Three Rivers and 1 in Montreal. In Ontario they are distributed as follows: 2 in Ottawa, 1 in Toronto and 1 in London.

The Quebec conferences are 20 in number, 15 French under the direction of the particular council of Quebec and 5 English under the St. Patrick's particular council.

### French Conferences of Quebec.

The progress made both in the membership and in the works of these conferences, which we showed in our last year's report, has been happily maintained. The number of active members is about the same as last year. This year a great many poor applied for charity to the conferences, whose funds were inevitably affected by the general scarcity of money ; but by prudent management they succeeded in maintaining the balance between receipts and expenditure.

It is but an act of justice to state here that the *Institut Canadien* of Quebec is entitled to the gratitude of our Conferences for having given a splendid literary soirée for the benefit of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and for generously handing over to it a handsome sum, the proceeds of the sale of tickets of admission.

We are also desirous of mentioning that the President and other members of the *Cercle Catholique* of this city have this winter, greatly helped these conferences by means of a house to house collection, the proceeds of which amounted to the sum of \$823.

They visited and gave relief to 775 families composed of 2888 persons, being an increase of 97 families and 341 persons over 1878. 132 sick and 38 dying persons were visited and assisted.

It should be noticed that out of this number of poor persons receiving relief there were 199 widows with their families composed of 409 children ; which proves that these conferences are anxious to afford assistance only to the most destitute class of the poor.

The new conference of St. Angèle, organized in this city within two years, has worked regularly through all seasons. We are happy to be in a position to recommend its aggregation.

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The Quebec *Œuvre du Patronage* continues to be very prosperous. Much might be said of the very important work of the *Patronage* of our poor children, and many interesting details might be given here respecting the establishment of that work, its progress, etc. Unfortunately special reasons have again prevented the directors of the work from making their annual report. About 180 children have attended its school during the year.

In a previous report we spoke of the *Ouvroir* and of the *Refectory* of the *Patronage*. The charitable ladies who have the management of the *Ouvroir* have again this year, with a zeal which does them honor, cut out and made up the clothing intended for the children.

The receipts of the *Refectory* were \$216.13. and the expenses \$168.00.

#### **Irish Conferences of Quebec.**

These five conferences, with smaller receipts than last year, have nevertheless succoured a greater number of families, 226 against 194, in 1878.

They show, also, a slight decrease in the number of admissions.

Another Irish conference was formed this year at St. Sauveur, under the patronage of St. Charles. We hope soon to be able to ask for its aggregation.

#### **Conferences of Three Rivers.**

The year 1879 has been a harder year for these conferences than the previous one. Owing to the scarcity of money, the receipts decreased more than \$400 and this compelled the conferences to reduce the number of their poor families as much as possible.

The work of the *Patronage* in this town progressed notwithstanding the year has been a bad one. The number

of children has increased from 43 to 54. The zeal of the president and directors of the work has been well rewarded by the good conduct of the children in the school and the progress they have made, under the tuition of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

One of the children has since entered the Brothers, novitiate. Several have been apprenticed to good masters.

The General Assembly of the month of July took place at Nicolet under the presidency of the *curé* of the parish. This meeting, composed of several members belonging to the conferences of Three Rivers and of Nicolet, was very solemn. The *curé* spoke in terms of praise of his conference and of the benefits it conferred on the poor, by its alms and good advice. Not less than 250 poor were assisted during the year.

The president of the Particular Council of Three Rivers declares, that he is much satisfied with the progress made by the conference of Arthabaskaville. "I had the pleasure," he says "of attending on two occasions the meetings of the conference of Arthabaskaville, and I was edified by the zeal of our good *confrères*. They understand better than a great many others the object of our society. Although it was in summer, all were present. Absence from the meetings is here the exception and assistance to the poor is given in summer and in winter."

A member of this conference, who left last fall to settle in the United States, has already established there a numerous conference composed of French Canadians, which gives every hope of success.

We shall here notice the aggregation, during the course of the year, of a third rural conference at Bécancour, in the diocese of Three Rivers.

Last summer the conferences of Three Rivers made a pilgrimage to *Ste. Anne de Beaupré*. As usual, a great

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number of persons from the town and the surrounding parishes joined them, and they almost all had the happiness of receiving communion in that holy shrine, where so many miraculous cures and blessings are granted to the faithful.

#### Conferences of Montreal.

The annual report of the Particular Council of this city shows a slight increase in the receipts of the conferences and in the work done.

There has been a decrease in the number of members, in certain conferences, but this is due in a great measure to the revision of the lists.

The weekly collections in some conferences of this city are very small and may give rise to suspicions of want of zeal. But such is not the case. These conferences are situated within very poor districts.

In Montreal the special works of charity are not under the control of the society.

Before proceeding to the conferences of Ontario we have still to speak of the isolated conferences of Levis, St. Germain de Rimouski, and Our Lady of Hull.

We have received no written report from the conference of Levis; nevertheless, we have reason to believe that it has worked pretty regularly throughout the year.

That of St. Germain de Rimouski is in about the same position as last year. They have visited 15 families this year. Some members of this conference displayed great charity for a poor traveller who was fatally injured by a railway accident. Being summoned in haste, they went to the station, carried him to a house in the vicinity, where they procured for him all the consolations of religion, visited him up to the time of his death and followed his remains to the grave.

## CONFERENCES OF ONTARIO.

### Conferences of Ottawa.

Of the four English conferences of this city three have forwarded statistics. We notice that the average attendance at the meetings is rather small, considering the number of members. The amount of the receipts and the assistance rendered is greater than during last year.

The conferences of Pembroke and Chelsea, under the jurisdiction of the Particular Council of Ottawa appear to be rather flourishing. Their work is restricted to visiting the poor in their homes.

### French Conferences of Ottawa.

These conferences, only two in number, have worked regularly during the year. Their work, the President of the Council writes us, has been, by force of circumstances, limited to visiting and relieving the poor in their homes, and to supporting the soup-kitchen during the winter. Soup and meat were distributed to 124 families comprising 555 persons. The subscription receipts amounted to \$212, collected, in the usual manner, by monthly payments.

The material assistance given by these two conferences consists generally in provisions and fire-wood. The Ladies of the Society of St Elizabeth have undertaken to supply the poor with clothing under the direction of the Sisters of Charity.

### Conferences of Toronto.

The statistics of the five conferences of this city show a rather considerable decrease in the receipts and expenditure as compared with last year. The number of admissions has also fallen off from 58 to 25. We need not, however,

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be astonished at a decrease which has been felt more or or less everywhere else, and from the same causes. We cannot therefore but rejoice at the success obtained this year by our *confrères* in Toronto under such unfavorable circumstances.

In October last, a new conference was organised in this city under the patronage of St. Peter, which has been at work all winter. At the general meeting of the conferences, on the 14th December last, the President of the particular council, in a very interesting address, gave the history of the establishment and of the progress of the society in Canada and particularly in Toronto. On the 10th November, 1850, the first conference of St. Vincent de Paul was founded in this city, under the patronage of Our Lady. At this meeting the purchase of premises suitable for the general meetings of the society and the preservation of its archives was discussed. It was then resolved to erect for that purpose a suitable building on property belonging to the society. We sincerely congratulate our *confrères* on their resolution which cannot but contribute to the success of the society in that city.

#### Conferences of London.

The two conferences are now united by a particular council, established on the 1st May last.

The conference of Our Lady of this town, of which we had no news last year, has sent us its report this year. It is a matter of regret that it only contains a balance sheet without any mention of its membership or of its works. We cannot therefore say any thing as to its position.

That of the Sacred Heart has progressed considerably; 12 new members were admitted during the year, forming a total of 26 members.

### Conferences of Hamilton.

There are at present in Hamilton two aggregated conferences; those of Our Lady and St. Patrick.

A particular council for their direction was organized in the course of the year.

On the 10th of March last we forwarded to the General Council the names of the President and of the other members of the Board of the new Council. We deem it right again to recommend its institution.

The position of these two conferences is excellent in every respect. Each has a numerous and active membership, and considerable means at its disposal; they do a great deal of good amongst the poor classes of this city, the greater portion of whom are Protestants. Both take an active interest in the patronage of poor children, of whom 45 were this year under their care, besides 15 children who were prepared for their first communion.

To visit at regular periods the sick in the hospital is one of their works of predilection. They also contribute, as in the past, and in a great measure, to the support of the asylum of St. Vincent's Providence for aged poor, founded by them and maintained under the management of the community of the Sisters of St. Joseph. They have, also, founded two night-schools.

### Conference of Our Lady of Guelph.

Our Lady of Guelph has 38 active members this year, being an increase of 7 over last year. There also the members devote themselves to the work of the Patronage; 10 members attend the Sunday-schools by turns and superintend the children. They also visit the prisoners regularly.

The library of the conference continues to be appreciated by the poor and by the members themselves.

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### Conference of Our Lady of Lindsay.

In justice to this conference we must state that it was through an involuntary error on our part that it did not appear last year in the Statistical Table and in the report of this Council, which had received from it at the usual date an excellent report. This year it has 18 active members who distributed alms to the amount of \$289.33 amongst 27 families.

### Conference of Brantford.

Our Lady of Brantford was aggregated on the 18th November, 1878. It is composed of 26 active members and owns a very fair library of which it makes good use.

### Conference of Belleville.

Our Lady of Belleville, which has a very considerable membership (51 active members) may be considered as the model of a good conference, in many respects, and in particular with reference to the regular attendance of its members at the meetings, both in summer and in winter. They visited 24 families, in which were 6 sick and 4 dying persons. They also have 38 scholars under patronage.

### Conference of Stratford.

The Conference of St. Joseph of Stratford, which has only been aggregated within a few months, has forwarded us a very detailed report upon its works. We notice that the average attendance at the meetings is very small in proportion to the number of its active members. There have been 3 or 4 admissions since the 4th of May last. The patronage of scholars is one of its principal works.

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Outside of Quebec and Ontario there are several other conferences which have been in operation for a length of

time in the other Provinces of the Dominion of Canada, viz: at Halifax and Yarmouth, (Nova Scotia,) St. John, and Chatham, New Brunswick,) Manitoba, &c., &c.

At Halifax, there are three conferences aggregated for upwards of twenty years and are united by a Particular Council.

At Yarmouth, a conference was formed about two years ago. We have had the pleasure of recommending its aggregation.

Up to the present time we have had little or no intercourse either with the particular council and conferences of Halifax or with the other conferences of the Maritime Provinces; last year nevertheless our annual report was addressed, to them. We propose to do the same this year and hope that as we become better acquainted with one our another correspondence will become more intimate and more frequent.

We have gone over, as briefly as possible, the every day work of our conferences and the works of charity which they practised during the year. Let us now cast a rapid glance over the ensemble of these labors and compare the results of this year with those of 1878. We shall thus be able to give a good idea of our situation. In 1878, the total receipts for Quebec and Ontario amounted to \$29,155.59 and the expenditure to \$24,432.33. This year we find the receipts to be \$30,113.72 and the expenditure \$27,497.73; being an increase of \$958.13 over the receipts of 1878 and \$3,065.40 on the amount of alms distributed. The number of active members and of the poor assisted in 1878 was as follows: 3655 active members and 2775 families representing 12,027 persons.

This year we have 3,691 active members and 3,165 poor families visited and succoured, composed of 12,743 persons. There has, therefore, been progress also in that respect. It is only the number of aggregations which has slightly diminished. Last year they were 6 in number;

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namely in the Province of Quebec: Our Lady of Grace at Hull, the conferences of Arthabaskaville, of Ste. Famille and of St. Bridget at Montreal.

In Ontario, a particular council for the French conferences of Ottawa, and the conferences of the Sacred Heart in London and of Our Lady in Brantford.

This year we have but one aggregation in the Province of Quebec, the conference of Becancour; two in Ontario, those of St. Peter in Hamilton and St. Joseph of Stratford, in addition to the Particular Council instituted at London.

The above figures suffice to show that the situation of our society in Canada is as flourishing this year as it was last year, if not more so.

Before closing the present report we would say one word regarding the *feasts* of our Society and the manner in which they are observed by the conferences. We are pleased to say that all deem it their duty to celebrate them in conformity with our rules.

This year, in Quebec, the general meetings were held alternately in the different churches of the city and were presided over by His Grace the Archbishop. The result has been a notable increase in the number of members present at the meeting and in that of the admissions.

G. M. MUIR,

*President.*

L. L. RIVARD, *French Secretary.*

EDWARD FOLEY, *English Secretary.*







