

Legislation Considered In House Here Yesterday

A definite statement that the present session of the Legislature may end tonight was made last evening by Premier A. W. Matheson.

The Premier said the members may be able to complete the business of the House by then. He also told the members of an invitation from Lieutenant Governor Hyndman to attend a reception at Government House this evening.

Yesterday afternoon's session, the second of the day, was devoted entirely to discussing bills before the House.

SCHOOL ACT

An amendment to the School Act was the longest and consumed the most time as Minister of Education Hon. Ken Clark answered a host of questions regarding various clauses.

One important change he pointed out now makes it possible for a school district to levy taxes on the farmland of an owner as well as on his house. This is to be done at 50 percent of the general rate and applies to all farm lands and farm property other than farm residences.

This farm rate shall be used only in such districts which elect the dual rates at the annual school meeting or by the unanimous approval of the Board of Trustees, provided that "after the first day of July 1959 the farm rate shall be mandatory in all districts having more than 50 percent of the ratepayers engaged in non-farming occupations".

The bill provides for establishment of Regional High

Schools by agreement of the several interested districts. It also provides a means of ending the existence of such a school.

This may be done after three years "provided that no capital expenditure has been incurred" if not less than one-third of the resident ratepayers in a district of the unit may petition the Minister for withdrawal from the unit. The Minister shall then refer the matter to a vote of the resident ratepayers of that district.

Fear of the school districts that large businesses establishing in their districts might be free of taxes is seen in the second last section of the amendment. It reads:

"The Board of Trustees of any school districts shall, for a period of five years after the commencement of operations, assess at 25% of the normal rate, the real property of any person, partnership or corporation engaged in processing of primary products of Prince Edward Island."

Little debate was held on the section which one or two members expressing the feeling that the districts should be glad to have large plants establish in their territory and should grant tax exemption at least for the first year.

Final section of the amendment raises the number of days compulsory school attendance in rural districts from 75 percent to 85 percent. The Minister of Education said this was a definite attempt to have the children in school more of the regular school days. He

remarked that in the city and towns the attendance rate was 90 percent.

However, the section carries an essential clause in that the Attendance Officer may after investigation reduce the percentage. This was described as being put in to offer some protection to children who may not be physically or mentally able to be in school that often. In this way they would still qualify for Family Allowance.

VETERINARY ACT

A full-scale debate was launched when an amendment to the P.E.I. Veterinary Medical Association Act was introduced. The amendment is primarily designed to protect both college-trained veterinarians and the farmers. It practically eliminates the local man "with a way with animals".

It was this latter feature that aroused the ire of several members who voiced their objections. However, Hon. Eugene Cullen, Minister of Agriculture, expressed his opinion that it was not the intention of the Association to deprive any man of his livelihood.

However, it was admitted that it would ban an "amateur" from charging for his services.

Among those taking part in the debate were Hon. George MacKay, R. R. Bell, Dr. L. G. Dewar, Leo Rossiter, Harvey Douglas, Morley Bell, and Harold Smith. The promoter, A. A. Macdonald, acting in the absence of F. A. Large, had questions tossed at him from all sides and as readily threw back answers.

to the other problem of deep concern to us—quality in our profession. This, fellow members, should be our first concern. No teacher who works only for money is worth his salt. Was it Sir William Ooster who said he would never enter the temple of science in the spirit of a money changer? Neither should any teacher enter the classroom in the spirit of the money changer.

We lament that the teaching profession lacks prestige today. That may be true, but let us remember prestige must be earned. It cannot be legislated. The quality of the work we do in our classrooms, and the impact we make on the minds of our students will determine our prestige in the community in which we labor. Prestige is not something to be directly sought after, but rather it is a by-product—a natural concomitant to a life of superior teaching. We must equip ourselves and conduct ourselves as befits members of a profession if we wish to be accorded prestige and professional status.

TEACHER-STUDENT

There are many ways in which we can broaden our knowledge. Every good teacher is a student not only in the sense of taking formal courses, valuable as they are, but a student in the school of Nature and of Experience—learning from any and every available source the great truths of the universe. The terms "teacher" and "scholar" should be synonymous. If we are not ever

seeking knowledge ourselves, how can we hope to arouse the curiosity and fire the imagination of our pupils? If we are not constantly leading them to wonder "why", we are not fulfilling our task.

It seems to me the extent of a man's education is the total of his intellectual, moral, social and spiritual development, and the skills he has mastered. It is in no small measure directly connected with the degree of thinking he has done and the philosophy of life he has hammered out for himself.

WEAKEST LINK

How are we, the members of the P.E.I.T.F. measuring up to our responsibilities and opportunities? With this question in mind I perused our inspectors' reports on "Competence of Teachers" in the 1957 Annual Report of the Department of Education. These reports indicate we have a considerable number of highly competent teachers, many more conscientious and energetic ones doing the best they can with the training and experience they have had, and, unfortunately, a few whose work is of an inferior type.

One inspector stated that "a few teachers seemed to lack proper enthusiasm for their work"; another noted a "few were disinterested and had no idea of the responsibilities of their position" and a third made the pungent remark that "the few who failed to perform their duties ade-

quately are all too often made the measuring stick for all teachers". In truth our organization is only as strong as its weakest member.

How can anyone treat the opportunities and responsibilities of teaching with indifference? If such there be here, my advice to you is to get out of teaching before you do further damage. A teacher's trust is a sacred one, and demands his or her best endeavor.

Mr. Leonard Brockington, speaking of the late Dr. S. N. Robertson during the recent Memorial Lecture said, "Gladly did he learn and gladly teach".

INQUIRING MIND

What a fine tribute to a great scholar and a dedicated teacher: "Yes, we must have an inquiring mind or we shall not stimulate our students to probe deeply into the mysteries of the universe. Are we 'stretching the minds' of the boys and girls in our care, or are we content merely to feed them mental 'pap' which they regurgitate on examination papers? Are we introducing them to the great world of Nature and to the world's bountiful store of great literature? To do so we must remain students for life.

This we can do in many ways—by taking prescribed courses, by reading widely, by availing ourselves of every opportunity to hear learned speakers on platform, radio or television, and by meditating on the true meaning of life. Some of the most truly educated and cultured men and women I have known have had

a comparatively meagre formal education. It depends on the person.

Do not misunderstand me. I have no wish to disparage formal education, but I do want to point out that those deprived of higher education should not use that fact as an excuse for not broadening their knowledge. We live only so long as we learn. If we cease to learn we then only exist.

Learning is a process that should continue from the cradle to the grave. To know only the subject matter we are required to teach is not sufficient. Rather we should teach from the abundance of our knowledge. Let us remember that if we restrict our learning to subject matter we shall surely suffer from intellectual poverty.

MORE RESPECT

Across this country there has developed an increased respect for the classroom teacher, regardless of grade level, too. Two teachers who played major parts in the Conference Workshop "Teachers, Quantity and Quality" were both teachers of elementary grades, and I believe that was not merely a coincidence. The problem is to give recognition for exceptional work in the classroom without removing the teacher concerned from active teaching. School boards and teachers' organizations realize the importance of keeping outstanding people in the classroom.

Here I should like to interject a comment on the one-room school in which many of you labor. For your encouragement and

inspiration I offer my humble and considered opinion that you have a tremendous potential in your hands. I was happy to read Mr. Alex Sim's comments on the one-room advantages—if there are not too many pupils, and if the teacher is competent, mature, and well-adjusted.

ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

The one-room school requires our very best teachers in order to fulfill its purpose. If you are a good teacher—and I use the term "good" in the sense in which Sir Ronald Gould used it—never be ashamed to declare it. You should be proud of it.

It seems to me we all need to take more pride in our vocation. I have always been proud to name myself a teacher; and having heard several hundred non-teachers discuss education in general and teachers in particular at the recent Canadian Conference on Education, I am prouder than ever to say I am still a classroom teacher although it is now possible for me, to devote only part of my time to instruction of pupils.

Realizing the magnitude of our task in the school and our responsibilities as citizens, let us endeavor to measure up to them by continually adding to our knowledge; by seeking new and better professional methods; by acquiring a sound philosophy of life and of education by developing a deeper understanding of and love for children; by holding fast to high ideals; and by maintaining a strong faith in God and in

our fellow man. Thus we shall bring honor to our profession and enhance and enrich its great traditions.

May Divine Providence be our guide!

Montreal Cartier To Have Recount

MONTREAL (CP) — A judicial recount was ordered Thursday in Montreal Cartier riding. It will begin Monday.

A check of totals Wednesday by the returning officer showed that Liberal Leon Crestohl, former member, led the four-man field with 7,997 votes and that runner-up Hyman Brock, Progressive Conservative, had 6,850.

Associate Chief Justice W. B. Scott of Superior Court Thursday accepted a petition signed by Maurice Mackay, identified as a voter, asking for the recount on grounds that some ballots marked for Mr. Brock were credited to Mr. Crestohl.

A judicial inquiry continues into allegations of voting-list padding in the riding.

BIG YEAR FOR FOODS

NEW YORK (AP) — The January-February-March quarter was the biggest in his company's history, Charles G. Mortimer, president of General Foods Corporation, announced Thursday. Mortimer said sales of the food-producing firm topped \$1,000,000,000 for the first time in history in the fiscal year ended March 31.

President Outlines Attitude Of P. E. I. Teachers Federation

"This province has many educational problems to face," but we, the teachers, are deeply concerned about the two to which the Conference speakers and delegates devoted a great deal of thought, namely (a) teachers' salaries and (b) quality in the profession," said Miss Mabel Matheson, President of the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation at the recent convention. Part of her Presidential message is as follows:

We welcome the announcement in the recent "Speech from the Throne" that heretofore it will be necessary for students to complete Grade twelve before being admitted to our Provincial Normal School. If this regulation is adhered to, and if requirements for graduation from Normal School are strictly enforced, this is definitely a progressive step.

SOME CONTROL

We welcome, too, the Minister of Education's intimation that cumulative sick leave is to be granted; and that legislation will be introduced to amend the Department of Education Act to give us, the teachers, some control of our own profession. The P.E.I.T.F. has been pressing for a Certification Board for several years.

The forecast increases of \$100 in total increments and \$100 in Superior First Class statutory salary, are sound in principle since they are granted for experience and qualifications, but I feel this is like patching an old garment when the occasion clearly calls for a new one. Our salary schedule is still "shabby". To use another metaphor these little "shots in the arm" are like administering a "pain killer" when the symptoms indicate a major operation is needed.

SOUND BASIS

To place teaching on a sound basis and to make its earning power comparable to that of other vocations demanding similar qualifications requires revolutionary changes—not a paltry \$100 here and there, but really drastic changes. This is necessary if teaching is to get its fair share of Prince Edward Island's bright young people. Other vocations are offering very attractive initial salaries, and it is not realistic to expect intelligent, ambitious young people to ignore such opportunities! When will the people of this province have done with sentimentality and face up to reality?

MUNDANE MATTER

In my remarks to you last year, I said nothing about salaries. I wish I could tell you now that a brand new schedule as good as, or better than, the emergency scale the P.E.I.T.F. presented to the Select Standing Committee on Education in March, 1957 and again to the Executive Council in Jan. 1958 was to be implemented by our government, and then pass on to less mundane things.

You know, fellow teachers, that is the chief reason we do not accomplish much in our sporadic efforts for decent salaries.

We get all stirred up about the salary question; and then suddenly we feel we do not want to dissipate our energies in pursuing such worldly matters. Unfortunately our employers and the general public do not fully appreciate this, and are prone to interpret our nonaggressive and nonpersistent attitude as weakness. So we are given very inadequate remuneration.

We had such high hopes when we learned the government was to receive an additional \$2,500,000 from the Federal treasury, but apparently we are once again to receive only the "crumbs".

Because of recent misleading and confusing press reports, I am constrained to comment further on teachers' salaries.

First, let me state emphatically that I do not believe the intelligent, public spirited men and women in this province are fully aware of the "sweet shop" wages some of our teachers are re-

ceiving. If they were correctly informed, they would surely realize the great injustice done these teachers, and would protest vehemently.

THE FACTS

It is our bounden duty to the boys and girls of this province to make the facts known to our people in order to assure a sufficient number of competent teachers for the future. This we cannot do unless we are well informed. For example, do you know that

(a) over 20 percent of our members were engaged to teach for the year 1957-58 for less than \$1500?

(b) about 70 percent fall in the under \$2000 bracket?

(c) there are only 7 teachers in our public schools earning \$4,000 or over?

(d) bank clerks with grade 12 receive initial salaries as high as \$1900, with increments beginning at three months?

(e) in the Armed Forces a recruit with grade 8 education may receive \$165 a month, plus medical and dental care; and a single lieutenant (grade 12 standing) may receive \$395 a month?

(f) in Federal Civil Service: Clerk 1 receives from \$1620-2130 Clerk 2 receives from \$2610-3150 Clerk 3 receives from \$2940-3600 Clerk 4 receives from \$3300-4020 and Stenographers salaries range from \$1860 to \$3600?

(g) a First Class Teacher (grade 12 plus 1 year of Professional Training) in Nova Scotia receives a minimum initial salary of \$1900 and at the end of the tenth year a minimum of \$2760; and the same teacher in Newfoundland would receive a minimum initial salary of \$2335 and at the end of the 8th year a minimum of \$3459?

I am sure you are interested in British Columbia salaries; but I hesitate to mention even the lowest, lest Prince Edward Island experience an immediate exodus of at least half her single women teachers and nearly all the men. I have examined the salary agreements of 57 British Columbia districts.

The initial minimum salary paid to the lowest certificated teachers ranges from \$2500 in Saltsprings to \$3400 in Alert Bay; and the maximum salaries for highest class of licence range from \$6000 at Kettle Valley to \$7500 at Peace River North.

No doubt you read the new salary schedule for civic employees approved by our City Council on March 18th. Here are a few figures chosen at random: City Clerk, \$5000, City Cashier, \$3500, Assessor \$4000, Collector \$3300, Truck drivers and helpers \$2400, Bricklayer \$2700, Chief of Police \$4000, Librarian \$2000, Charlady \$1200, Caretaker at dump \$2400, Assistant Caretaker at dump \$2400. You will agree these are very modest salaries for 1958. How do they compare with those of urban teachers in this province?

COMPARE TEACHERS

A rapid check reveals there are 20 Summerside teachers and 34 Charlottetown teachers earning less than the caretaker and the assistant caretaker at the city dump! Now I realize it is important to the physical health of our citizens to have competent people directing the disposal of refuse and the job is surely worth \$2400; but is it more important than the task of guiding the development of the minds of our boys and girls? If salary is a criterion, apparently our civic authorities believe it is.

Probably many of you can produce just as glaring discrepancies in your own districts. In many cases unskilled labor demands and receives more than the teacher.

The Patriot of March 15 carried the following statement: "33 teachers in P.E.I. schools get less than \$1200 a year, and at least 2 of them get only \$1000."

Let us now turn our attention

cher shortage? It is a miracle we hold the highly competent teachers we have in this province.

To relate teachers' and nurses' salaries in P.E.I. is to compare the financial status of two professions whose ranks are being decimated by the same malady—financial malnutrition.

SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers' salaries are a responsibility to be shared by the Provincial Government and the District. To use the argument that some extremely under-paid teachers are receiving all they are worth is to condemn the districts that hire teachers whom they apparently consider worth so little to the community. Is that the best these communities can do for their boys and girls? You see this is a very shallow argument. Let the districts not forget their trustees hire the teachers and so are responsible for the quality of teaching in their schools.

Salary scales provide very interesting study; and I strongly recommend them to our Workshops in order that our members may be intelligently informed, and so be able to correct erroneous impressions in the public mind.

Of course you know that salary schedules in other provinces are based on academic and professional qualifications, experience, and responsibility of position, and not on sex or personal responsibilities of the teacher.

These days we hear the plea that artists, composers, writers, should not have to be greatly concerned about money, but should be assisted financially by the state so they can devote their talents to creative work. Should not teachers of quality be relieved of excessive worry over money matters so that they might use their little free time for research, study and meditation? Teachers should be "thinkers", not "sitters".

Incidentally, teachers should discharge their duties as citizens, but should not become so involved in community activities that no time remains each day for "going apart". Unless we have time for reflection we become mentally and spiritually impoverished, and our influence in the school and in the community is diminished accordingly.

INDUSTRY AGREES

It may seem strange to you that during the Canadian Conference on Education it was the representatives of industry, labor, business who stated repeatedly that teachers' salaries must be placed on a competitive basis before sufficient numbers of young people of desirable personality, ability and integrity will choose teaching as a career. They realize very clearly that factors which mitigate against children's chances of securing a sound foundation in our schools inevitably affect the quality of work done by their members or employees. They realize, too, that the most important factor in an educational system is the classroom teacher, and that the quality of Canada's teachers determines the quality of the education received by this country's students. They are well aware that modern buildings, elaborate equipment and a well-planned curriculum prove of little value unless they are first-rate teachers to instruct and to guide those who attend our schools. Moreover, they ask why the profession that lays the foundation for all the others should be the "Cinderella" among the professions.

P.E.I. CONFERENCE

Since returning from the Conference I have been advocating a P.E.I. Conference on Education, organized along lines somewhat similar to the national plan that worked so well. I feel it would afford an opportunity for representatives of all interested provincial organizations, trustees, supervisors, departmental officials, administrators and teachers to discuss our educational problems; to have their information on existing conditions; to pool our ideas; and, we should hope, to agree on effective action.



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