

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1920

CAUSE FOR ANXIETY

We publish with pleasure, not wholly free from humiliation, the letter of Rev. W. I. Green in this issue.

Our correspondent, after an absence of ten years, sees this province as it is and has a distinct recollection of what it was ten to twenty years ago. He sees material prosperity on every hand, a marked improvement in the farms, farm buildings, stock and the general comfort of the people, and, in our schools, retrogression, "child teachers receiving child salaries" and, worst of all, the parents apparently ignorant of the drift in which they and their children are involved. How far we have drifted can be seen only by those whose memory can carry them back to the conditions of ten, twenty and even thirty years ago. To these the drift is a tragedy. Today, men and women are expending their energies in chasing dollars and cents, the children, where there are children, generally helping their parents and possibly attending school when there is nothing to do at home; then, the school was full of children; was the centre and the pride of the community; the parents were determined that whether the calves and the pigs and the cattle were cared for or not, the children must go to school, the school must be kept up, the teacher must be the best available.

Many things have happened to bring about this condition. Great numbers of our young men and women have left the province; children who should have been born in the province are born elsewhere; many of our homes are childless; many of our schools have so few children in attendance that they are looked upon as a sort of unnecessary burden to be carried with as little expense as possible. Altogether it has been a devolution, slow, gradual, insidious; it has grown upon us until, before we realized it, our schools fell into the hands of "child teachers receiving child salaries" because these were the cheapest, and, at last, because they were the only ones available.

This is true only of our country schools and fortunately there are many shining exceptions. Some of our schools are doing as good work as they ever did but we fear the other kind make up the rule.

Other causes for our retrogression might also be mentioned. In our insane haste to become rich and retain our population, we have begun the impossible task of making farmers of our boys and girls in school. The child who is to become a successful farmer and a useful citizen capable of properly enjoying life and of being of service to his country must have as sound a foundation to build upon as the child who is to become a doctor, a clergyman or any other of the so called professions. This foundation can be laid only in the common school, and we are neglecting it. Our correspondent's citation of the letter to the Fruit Department is a striking example of this. A man may be "successful" in raising crops and stock, but he is neither a successful farmer nor a useful citizen if he has not enough education to take an intelligent interest in world events and stand shoulder to shoulder with the leaders in his community. The foundation for this intelligence must be laid in the common school.

What influences are being brought to bear upon this vital question? Our correspondent asks "Can not the spiritual leaders of the people, the clergy, do something?" Unfortunately, in too many cases the spiritual leaders are in the same predicament as the teachers: In too many cases the Church, like the school, is regarded as a burden and the clergy have all they can do to secure their own stipends. Here also, unless we wake up, we may find the "child teacher receiving a child's salary." Our churches unfortunately are not exercising the influence over our school matters which they ought to exercise. The subject might be continued indefinitely. In the meantime we commend to our readers a careful perusal of Mr. Green's letter. It will certainly cause some serious thinking; may we not hope that it will also result in the "stirring up" he tells us is so necessary?

STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS.

The present strike in England is probably the most far reaching in its effects of any of which we have any record. Should the railway and transport men go out, as they threaten to do if a satisfactory settlement of the miners' strike is not effected, it will be as disastrous to British trade and industry as the war was.

It is interesting to recall the history of mining strikes in Great Britain. As far back as 1756 the Northumberland miners struck for several weeks, but they were obliged to resume work without any betterment of their condition.

In 1893 the biggest strike ever then recorded in British mining took place affecting the whole coal mining area, about 300,000 men being out at once. In this dispute the miners refused to recognize the principle that wages should follow prices and insisted on a "living wage". The government intervened in this strike and succeeded in effecting a settlement.

These were the principal strikes in the coal mining business but they were all settled with more or less dislocation of business, and with great loss to the miners themselves although in the end the miners made more gains than losses.

How the present trouble will end it is too soon to predict but already it has cost the miners' and the

THE PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open for the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse opinions expressed by its correspondents.

CAUSE FOR ANXIETY

Sir—During the years 1897 to 1901 I taught school in this, my native province. They were four of the happiest years of my life. I was deeply interested in my work and I believe the children made good progress. For the past ten years I have been in Trinidad and part of my work is the teaching of teachers and the supervision of schools. It is the part of the work that I like best and the part I believe most fruitful of good. In all this world there is no work so important as the training of children for no other work gives such definite and permanently good results. I have the greatest faith in the possibilities of the common school. When I come home to my native land and find how the school fares, frankly I am disappointed. I had reason to expect improvement, a more competent class of teachers and better work, but as far as I can see and as far as I can learn from those who know the conditions our educational system gives cause for anxiety. On every hand one sees development and improvement. Dwelling houses, barns, lands, stock, farming and travelling conveniences, all have decided marks of improvement, all keeping up with the times; but in the education of the young, the crucial point in a nation's life it is bitterly disappointing to find rather retrogression, to find a staff of child teachers receiving child salaries, and the worst of the situation is that those who are being injured most, namely the parents, seem to care least. There is a feeling abroad that education, even a good common school education is not very necessary, much less to produce lamps that shine in college halls. There is a mighty ambition that the children get on, but certainly not by the royal road of mental training. Some months ago there arrived at the Fruit Department in Ottawa a letter from a prominent and successful farmer of this province. That letter was a sight. It had not a period or a capital from beginning to end, the simplest words were misspelled, and grammar did not have a chance at all. The man is to be pitied but not blamed. It is our system, and this is the direction in which we are drifting.

The trouble is this, that people will not pay money for education; they will not until they value it more highly than they do now. The average salary paid today to the teachers of this province is a disgrace to any country as prosperous as this. Farm hands get more than the men and women whose work it is to prepare the intellectual and moral lives of our children. One gets tired making comparisons. In August a competent lady teacher left this Province and its

Daily Selections

Guardian Readers
Furnished by W. S. Louson.

MAN WHO DELIVERS THE GOODS

There's a man in the world who is never turned down
Wherever he chances to stay;
He gets the glad hand in the popular town
Or out where the farmers make hay.
He's greeted with pleasure on deserts of sand,
And deep in the aisle of the wood;
Wherever he goes—there's a welcoming hand—He's
The man who delivers the goods.
The failures of life sit around and complain,
The rods haven't treated them white;
They've lost their umbrellas whenever there's rain,
And they haven't their lanterns at night.
Men tire of failures who fill with their sighs
The air of their own neighborhoods;
There's a man who is greeted with love-lighted eyes—He's
The man who delivers the goods.
One fellow is lazy and watches the clock,
And waits for the whistle to blow;
And one has a hammer with which he will knock,
And one tells a story of woe.
And one if requested to travel a mile
Will measure the perches and rods;
But one does his stunt with a whistle and smile—He's
The man who delivers the goods,
One man is afraid he'll labor too hard,
The world isn't yearning for such;
And one man is ever alert—on his guard—
Lest he put in a minute too much.
One has a crouch on, a temper that's bad,
And one is a creature of moods;
So it's time for the joyous and vallicking led for



The Changing Seasons

LAST month the sun ripened the crops; now comes the frost. In September, men strove against time to make the harvest safe; now, the toil is lighter as the days grow shorter. The green trees have shed their leaves and changes mark the season everywhere.

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CURRENT COMMENT

Will-o-the-wisp chasing has developed into quite a popular pastime, and the Hon. MacKenzie King is enjoying the sport to the full in his western tour. The fact that the bubble when caught disappears with magical swiftness seems, to his toy gathering mind, to increase the excitement of the chase. Some of them were apparently charged with something stronger than the ordinary phosphorus, for at their bursting the doughty Liberal leader was completely prostrated by the reacting aroma. He thought he saw something fancy in an attack upon Premier Meighen's comparison of trade policies, but the "come back" was so fatally forcible that his solar plexus was macerated by the impetus of the rebound. Scarcely recovered from this knock out blow, he tried a similar stunt with the Hon. C. C. Ballantyne in some wild statements about spending millions of dollars on the Mercantile marine without parliamentary authority. In this the same fate overtook him—a complete flattening out both of himself and his home made yarn. The next shadow was surely a promising one, and from which at first sight he anticipated a rich political Bonanza, and when the Board of Commerce sugar order was announced he lost no time in tabling it as a government crime. The explosion of the bubble was the most disastrous of them all coming back with a paralyzing shock to the discomfited Liberal shadow chaser.

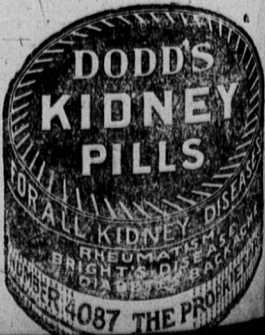
Government, can come under such a classification. But even so, it would not be "without number". There is the Conservation Commission, appointed by the Laurier Government of which Mr. King was a member; the Civil Service Commission, also an institution of many years ago, enlarged in scope by the Borden Government, and the Railway Commission appointed under Union Government with the approval of the Liberal party in parliament. Now where are the rest of those "COMMISSIONS WITHOUT NUMBER"? Amongst the evening shadows in the MacKenzie King hunting grounds.

It is important however that Mr. King is out-and-out hot-foot after those commissions, which are only barnacles upon the ship of state, and which must be scraped off and eliminated at whatever cost. Presumably his own pet, the Conservation Commission, is not to be strangled. It is non-political and performs a service not easily handled by the departments of government. The Civil Service and the Railway Commission's are theretofore the only two victims that he has booked for the slaughter. The proposal to run government railways upon the same lines of practical management as adopted at the present, meet his approval. It might perhaps be better in the interests of the country, but the Liberal leader is immensely impressed with the force of PATRICK NAGE in carrying elections, and he delights in being able to dangle something in the nature of the loaves and fishes amongst the hungry political multitude. For the same reason the Civil Service Commission must go to the block. This is his present policy, but what would he do if he were by any strange fatality returned to power? Just exactly what Laurier

...Continued on Page 8...

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