

Minister Of Education

Interest chargeable on overdue tax assessments. These are matters which concern you only indirectly.

The final group of amendments which I proposed to the School Act makes it possible for trustees to borrow money to pay teachers' supplements on a monthly basis. This may not, of course, make any immediate change in the old system of paying your supplements twice a year but it does provide a way of doing it for willing districts. At one time the teacher's supplement may have been regarded as something extra or a bonus, but this view surely is no longer valid. It represents a substantial part of your salary and such I would favour seeing it paid in monthly instalments. School districts which may see their way clear to make this change will find it easier to get teachers as I believe you would appreciate the advantage of regular monthly payments.

The final amendment to the School Act did not originate with me although requests were made for it. I felt obliged to follow the advice of the Council of Education which was to take a vote at all school meetings this year to ascertain the wishes of the school districts as to the date of the annual school meeting. However, a motion was made from the floor of the House that the date be changed to the first Tuesday in June and this motion carried. You may, therefore, inform your district that the school meeting this year will be on Tuesday, June 1st, so they may prepare for it.

The amendments to the Education Department Act provided for three representatives from the Teachers' Federation to be members of the Council of Education and one representative from the Home and School Association as well as the director of the Prince Edward Island Vocational School. I believe this change gives your Teachers Federation proper representation on this important advisory council.

Superannuation Act

I believe, however, that many of you will be interested and should be interested in the change to the Teachers' Superannuation Act. This may possibly not meet with the full approval of all but I think it should meet with fairly general approval. Decision to go ahead with this amendment which substantially changes the whole basis for the payment of pensions was arrived at only after long and careful deliberations. The reasons for it are simple: 147 teachers presently employed have breaks in service exceeding six consecutive years and their previous teaching service was until the amendment passed, ineligible to be counted as teaching service for pension purposes. This was a serious matter for these teachers. The continuity of service clause has now been eliminated. Perhaps many of you didn't realize it but nevertheless you would have sooner or later come to the grim realization that many of your teaching years would not have counted at all towards your pension. Of these 147 teachers, 52 had a break from 6 to 9 years; 69 had a break from 10 to

20 years; 36 had a break of over 20 years. In addition to those previously mentioned, there are 107 of the present teachers with service prior to July 1st, 1931, of these 70 had their services voided prior to 1931 because they had not been engaged in teaching during the year 1931 when the Act first came into force. This discrimination has also been corrected.

In all, therefore, there are 217 of the present teachers in this Province who may benefit from the change. It is, in my way of thinking, primary and elementary justice for these 217 people, and this was the basic reason why the change was made.

Fund Guaranteed

The effect it may have on the pension fund, while important, is, in my opinion, only of secondary importance. After all the fund is fully guaranteed by the Province and in the long run if there is any deficiency in the fund it is the Provincial Treasurer who must pay.

P. W. C. Legislation

The last Act was the Prince of Wales College Act. There were several acts in the past concerning Prince of Wales College and the most recent of these was passed in 1939. However, this act disappeared and since 1945 the entire control, under the law, was with the Minister of Education. The new act provides for a Board of seven trustees including the Principal of the College, the Director of Education and five members of the Executive Council. This Board has now been established under the chairmanship of Premier A. W. Matheson and I am included among its members. The effect is to broaden the responsibility of directing the affairs of the College.

I have spoken long enough on the effect of recent legislation. Perhaps I should enter the popular discussion field and dwell upon what has been termed by Collier's Magazine as the 'greatest crisis in the 300 year history of American education.' Sometimes our people become confused when they read such articles or when they read books in condemnation of our educational systems and they immediately conclude that the worst of all things imaginable are presently with us in our own Island schools. Ladies and gentlemen, I believe you will agree with me that they are not. Our schools are well directed and well run and while improvements are possible and are most desir-

able, nevertheless, our educational foundation rests on solid ground. At any rate, so far, I have not been able to discover any evidence to the contrary.

I do not wish to be tagged with any of the new popular designations such as 'progressivist' or 'traditionalist.' Personally, I think there is considerable room between the two extremes. I do not believe that most of our educationalists are either good or bad, or bad or good, depending on the eyes through which they are viewed. I believe in the idea somewhat expressed in these words:

"There is so little good in the best of us
And so little bad in the worst of us.
That it ill behooves any of us
To talk about the rest of us."

Teacher Shortage

There is one problem that faces us in common with other Provinces and with other countries — that is the problem of a shortage of fully qualified teachers.

During the recent hearings before the Committee on Education the thought was expressed concerning the possibility of combining the academic and professional training by giving more professional training by an extension of the college year and by summer courses. This, among other things, I have noticed has been misunderstood. One thing that is foremost in our minds is that there shall be no lowering of the standard of the training of teachers. In fact the discussion cen-

tered on the raising of the academic standard so that all second class teachers would have matriculation standing. In other words it would still take two years beyond Grade X, plus an extended college course and summer courses in purely professional work to qualify.

I must say that nothing has been worked out along these lines. The problem presents many difficulties but it has certain advantages among the greatest of which would be qualification for teaching without the loss of one year of academic advancement. This might result in more young men and young women taking what might be termed an intensive side course of teacher training.

Changing Picture

Now with reference to the pupils in the high school grades of our schools — a few years ago any of us might have hesitated to urge our young people to prepare for the teaching profession. Today, however, the picture has changed. Steadily increasing salaries during the past few years, and better working conditions have combined to make the teaching profession an attractive one for a young man or young woman starting out in life. Even if it be but for a few years a young person can make a fine contribution to the teaching service and at the same time acquire both experience and training that will be valuable in other fields. I would urge you when giving guidance and advice to your upper grade pupils to point out the great

need for qualified teachers and the opportunities that lie in this field.

In closing I might observe that here in Prince Edward Island with our one-room school where many teachers have to teach up to ten grades, your task as teachers is a difficult one. But despite criticisms which occasionally are levelled against our schools, our pupils when they go beyond our Province, whether from our rural high schools or Prince of Wales College, hold their own with the best in Canada. Credit for this must largely remain with you the school teachers of our Province.

A short time ago I received a letter from a former teacher of mine who is presently teaching the same Grade V, and in the same public school which I attended in Minnesota in 1923. This lady has made a life career of teaching and I wholeheartedly agree with the words she used in her letter concerning the teaching profession: 'there are few fields of higher endeavour or of greater importance.'



EGAD, LEANDER! COME OUT! I KNOW YOU'RE IN THAT CAVE!
A TRUE HOOPLE NEVER SHRINKS FROM PAYMENT FOR A MISDEED!
NOW! A MAN ALWAYS FACES THE MUSIC!
OKAY, UNCLE BULGY—I MEAN AMOS! I DUCKED OUT HERE FOR THE NIGHT BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE A TRAIN ROBBER!
I DIDN'T THINK TURNING ON YOUR HOWL MACHINE WOULD SCARE THE WHOLE TOWN STIFF!

PADDLE HIM? CERTAINLY!
WELL...
AH—ER—MAYBE =

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