

POOR DOCUMENT

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THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1919

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WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

Is a deliberate effort being made to sidetrack vocational training? There is no more reason why the federal and provincial governments should pay the full cost of such training than the full cost of the present high school or any other local school. The federal government might fairly and doubtless would contribute toward the cost of a technical education. The provincial government is already pledged to pay half the salary of vocational teachers. It is for the city to do its part, and it has been asked as a beginning to grant a sum not exceeding \$8,000. The school board has been asked to appoint a vocational training board. But what do we find? The demand for higher salaries for teachers is put forward as a reason why nothing should be done for the children. The Times-Star does not hesitate to assert that the rights of the boys and girls are as important as the claims of the teachers. There is no reason whatever for considering one of them to the exclusion of the other, or to put one against the other. It is up to the city council to consider the rights of young people who ought to be given vocational training quite as seriously as it does the demand of the teachers. The former, under the act, cannot send delegations to the school board or to city hall. None the less they are the coming citizens, and no reactionary individual or group of individuals should be permitted to block the effort to give them their rights in this matter. If every teacher got a million a year it would not give the boys and girls proper training under the present system. Let the teachers be well paid, but let the children also be given their right in this matter.

TEACHERS' SALARIES

Away back in the seventeenth century Thomas Fuller wrote of the profession of school-teaching:—
"There is scarce any profession in the commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly performed. The reasons whereby I conceive to be these: First, young scholars make this calling their refuge, yea, perchance, before they have taken any degree in the university, common schoolmasters in the country."
Secondly, others who are able, use it only as a passage to a better preferment, to patch rents in their present fortune, till they can provide a new one, and, before they take themselves to a more painful calling, they are discharged from the miserable reward which in some places they receive."

England has made great progress, since Fuller's time, and is today leading the world in educational reform, but the teacher problem is still with her. The London Times not long since said:—
"We have now reached the point when we must have teachers, and highly skilled teachers, in great numbers; and not only in the elementary, secondary and technical schools, but in the new continuation schools, where over two million young persons will have to be taught and taught well. How are we going to get them? One point the teachers themselves have taken in hand, and that is the point of salaries. Unless a substantial living wage to men and women is paid, the teachers will not come forward. That point the government and local authorities have realized, though the lack of courage on the part of departmental dignitaries and of the government in not insisting on the formation of national scales with local variations is reducing the effect of the general rise in salaries on the minds of those who are hesitating whether they should not take up what is admittedly one of the noblest of professions. The superannuation bill is another sign that the government realizes the importance of the financial side of the question. On the whole we think that teachers and would-be teachers may rest assured that all reasonable demands for certitude in respect to adequate salaries and pensions are being or will be met."

How gratifying it would be, and how greatly to our credit, if the same assurance could be given to the teachers and would-be teachers of New Brunswick.

The state of Vermont has entered upon a vigorous policy of forest development on its wild lands. A letter from Montpelier says:—"The State of Vermont has acquired for its forestry reserve about 6,000 acres of what woodmen call 'wild' land in Washington County at Lanesboro. This tract is adjacent to 80,000 additional acres of suitable 'wild' land on which the state expects to take an option. In the spring the forestry department intends to set out trees. The new reserve is the third and largest owned by the state. On Mt. Mansfield there is a reserve of 5,000 acres and on Camel's Hump one of 4,500 acres. These are producing small trees now."

The British Dominions are to be represented at the peace conference. This concession is a generous recognition by all the powers of the service these Dominions rendered in the war.

If the school board is to get an additional \$80,000 the city council should add \$8,000 for vocational training and demand the appointment of a vocational training board.

COMMUNITY CENTRES.

Mrs. Jessie H. Childs, who is very prominent in woman's work in New York, advocates community centres to take the place of saloons. Such centres, she holds, should be numerous. Her views are thus expressed:

"Each small neighborhood should have its community centre—a place where rich and poor, young and old, black and white, could meet, commingle, confer, and realize to the fullest possible extent their obligations as citizens of the United States. It would be a step in the fulfillment of real democracy. Every one of these community centres should be a clubhouse, open to every resident of the neighborhood for information, guidance, assistance, patriotic effort, and recreation. There should be a forum for open discussion. A tea room should be established. There should be all sorts of wholesome recreational features. Frequent entertainments should be held in which as many members of the community should take part as could be induced to do so. We should have an abundance of good music. Every neighborhood has its talent. That should be encouraged, developed, employed. We should have gymnasiums, too, and swimming pools. And we should have billiard tables—in short, everything to make the place attractive to the people. Our activities should be modeled largely upon those which have made the Y. M. C. A. hubs so successful. Something must be done to take the place of the saloon. You can't simply turn the people out into the streets. They must foregather somewhere. The saloon has been called the poor man's club, and with all its drawbacks, that is what it is. What we propose is a club to take its place—and fill that place better. These places should be so conducted, should be made so thoroughly to exemplify and illustrate real democracy, as to make them in truth 'people's houses.'"

Mrs. Childs quotes President Wilson in support of the establishment of community councils, as an advance of vital importance. He says:

"It will, I believe, result when thoroughly carried out in welding the nation together as no nation of great size has ever been welded before. It will build up from the bottom an understanding and sympathy and unity of effort and purpose which will no doubt have an immediate and decisive effect upon our great undertaking. You will find it, I think, not so much a new task as a unification of existing efforts, a fusion of energies, now too much scattered, and at times somewhat confused, into one harmonious and effective power."

It is only by extending your organization to small communities that every citizen of the state can be reached and touched with the inspiration of the common cause."

President Wilson points out that the school house would be an excellent centre for community activities, but whether there or elsewhere an effort should be made to "spread the realization of the great truth that it is each one of us as an individual citizen upon whom rests the ultimate responsibility."

If the era of reconstruction does not bring all the people closer, in a general and united effort to solve community problems, it will fail to achieve its purpose.

HOUSING CODE FOR BOSTON.

What the Associated Charities desires to see done in St. John is also recommended in Boston, where legislation is being sought to provide a housing code. The Christian Science Monitor says:—"Establishment of a housing code for the city of Boston, a code distinct from the existing building code, is advocated by the mayor's committee on housing, in a report submitted to Mayor Peters. The committee disapproves of the wooden 'three-decker' dwelling, and recommends prohibition of further construction of this type in Boston, and the substitution of non-combustible walls, or second-class construction, as of greater civic value and more permanent worth to the owner. The recommendations will form the basis of a bill to be introduced in the present legislature. It is recommended that work start immediately upon the improvement of the north end as outlined by the city planning board, the work to be completed within one year. Establishment of a municipal fund, to be administered by a housing council of five members, for making loans with which to encourage the building of multiple dwellings at low rental, is proposed. Another proposed fund of \$10,000 annually would provide for the razing of dwellings unfit for habitation. Means for providing more light and air in congested districts are outlined. The duty of the individual is set forth in these words: 'Good housing depends very much upon the interest taken in the matter by the citizens to understand and promote good housing. Without it there will be lacking many of the virtues essential to the inhabitants of a healthful, prosperous community.'"

Hope makes a man believe that something will happen which he knows will not.

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LIGHTER VEIN

Hardly Worth While.

"Have you any terrapin?"
"Yes, sir."
"Could you serve me a half portion?"
"We could serve it," said the waiter judiciously, but you couldn't see it."

Located.

"Dear Clara," wrote the young man, "pardon me, but I'm getting so forgetful I proposed to you last night, and really forgot whether you said 'yes' or 'no.'"
"Dear Will," she replied by note, "so glad to hear from you! I knew that I said 'no' to someone last night, but I had forgotten who it was."

Jones—Can you manage to meet my expenses?
Jorkins—Meet them? Jerusalem, man, I can't run away from them!

The Ensign—There seem to be a good many backs in this light.
The Coxswain—Yes, sir. An ocean greyhound chased a cat boat up our crossbones.

Much More Important.
He—Will you promise me the altar to love, honor and obey me?
She—Goodness knows what I promised. I was listening to hear what you promised.

Who the Actress Married.
Patience—You know she married?
Patrice—Whom did she marry?
"Her press agent."
"There! And she always told me she had such a horror of men who didn't tell the truth!"

Knew the Symptoms.
"Madam," announced the new maid, "your husband is lying unconscious in the reception hall, with a large box beside him and crushing a paper in his hand."
"Ah!" cried madam, in ecstasy, "my new hat has come!"

Considerate Cuss.
"No," she declared. I will never marry any man who hasn't grit enough to go and ask papa for me."
"That's all right, but you ought to remember that your father has a weak heart and sudden joy has often been known to prove fatal in such cases."

THE BEST CURE FOR TRUANCY.
(By S. B. Cinclear, M. A., Ph. D., in the Toronto Globe.)

An editorial in Saturday's Globe calls attention to the fact that in many Ontario schools the truancy act is practically a dead letter. It would be difficult to find a country where parents are more law-abiding, more interested in the welfare of their children, or better able to send them regularly to school than in Ontario. It is also a national duty to see that every Ontario child receives a liberal education. Why, then, has the

Ontario compulsory truancy act (admittedly good in itself) failed?
Some years ago in a western Ontario town the cases of truancy became so alarmingly frequent that the teachers held a meeting and decided to tackle the problem and ask the parents to assist in the solution. The announcement was made in the class rooms and in the local press; that on the following Monday and succeeding days the teachers would visit the homes of all children absent from their classrooms. The subject became the talk of the town. Many parents assumed the role of truant officer for their own children, and the teachers did their part wisely and thoroughly. The following Friday there was not a child absent who should have been present, and as long as that teaching staff remained intact truancy in that town was practically unknown. All of which goes to show that under certain conditions when teachers and parents actively combine

to stamp out truancy they can do so without invoking the aid of a strong arm of the law. In most Ontario small towns, villages and rural sections where the moral standard is high and everyone may be said to know everyone else such a solution could easily be applied.

In these days of reconstruction it may be well to consider if compulsion should ever be necessary and to ask the question if we had the right kind of school would not all normal children (after a few days' trial) desire to go to it?

I knew an Ontario boy fourteen years of age who played truant for days, taking his lunch with him, and spending all day alone in a cemetery, rather than go to school. I know another who played truant from a collegiate institute and spent the entire school days for a week in a Y. M. C. A. library, religiously studying a technical volume on electricity.

I have known hundreds of boys who have been saved by a change from courses and conditions of study, which in the nature of things could not appeal to them, to others where they have found themselves and gone on to efficient citizenship. I have visited many schools in Europe and America where without recourse to a truant act, truancy has for many years been entirely unknown.

Such schools do not come by chance. They are the result of careful study of the characteristics and aptitudes of children and the needs of the community.

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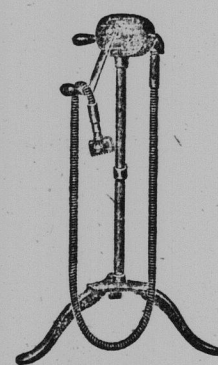
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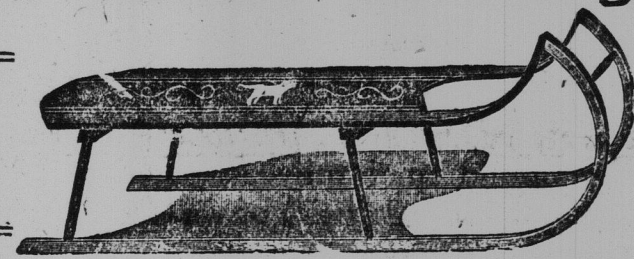
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