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SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENTS

House in Committee Upon
Various Government Bills—
Medical Inspection in the
Schools

LABOR DELEGATIONS
REPRESENTED ON FLOOR

Proposal to Prevent Inspector
Being Summoned in Civil Ac-
tion Criticised—Third Class
Certificates

The presence upon the floor of the House Monday of a large deputation representative of organized labor, very possibly inspired a more than casual debating of matters directly and especially touching the interests of the workers, which very conveniently presented themselves in connection with the consideration in committee of the amendments to the Factories Act, under which the Government Inspector is to be removed hereafter from availability as an expert witness in civil actions. Mr. Hawthornthwaite, more particularly, energetically opposed the suggested exemption, and incidentally left the way open for the Attorney General to effectively answer him, with several surprises that were not exactly welcome to the Socialist leader. It was in the debating of the contents of the Factories Act amendment bill that the first session of the House in the week gained its principal interest, routine prevailing otherwise.

At the committee stage upon the bill providing for Medical Inspections in the Public Schools, the father of the bill (Hon. Dr. Young) met very courteously the point that had been taken by the Nanaimo member as to the inadvisability of any qualified medical practitioners being in any way permitted to conduct inspections of the pupils in respect to health or physical condition. As the minister had already explained at an earlier stage, the intention of the section providing for inspections by any others than medical men was designed solely to cover such inspections as might be made by sanitary officers, etc., with a view to the improvement of sanitary conditions, and this was made more plain before the bill was finally reported to the House, complete with minor amendments.

During the half hour which the House spent in committee on the School Act amendment bill (a progress report being afterwards submitted) numerous amendments were presented or suggested and ultimately reserved. Mr. Hawthornthwaite was desirous of striking out the term "superior schools," holding that it smacked of paternalism; while Hon. Dr. Young defended the term employed. He had originally contemplated including special schools sub-high schools, but found that a more distinctive name was required. As the minister has grown these schools would naturally develop into high schools. The matter was finally left in abeyance. Mr. Hawthornthwaite was also not quite certain as to whether the provision to establish school libraries was sufficiently explicit, while elicited an explanation from the minister as to the scope and purpose of such libraries as adjuncts of the schools, this section also eventually "standing over."

Extending Life of Certificate.
The principal debate arose, however, upon the proposal of the government to make third class teachers' certificates available for life upon the holding of a qualification for pedagogic success at attendance at the Normal for thirteen months all. It was contended by the opposition members that the action contemplated placed a premium upon teachers contenting themselves with the lowest grade certificate, as a result of which the rural schools would suffer, while the minister made it clear that the requirement of four months' preliminary Normal school training, and nine months subsequently, would rather induce prospective teachers to go in for the higher grade certificates, meaning better positions and consequently higher salaries. On the other hand, at the worst it meant an improvement of the educational standard of the rural schools, so that all advantage lay with the innovation.

Mr. Jardine favored the making valid for life of any third class certificate upon which the holder had taught for ten years, without requiring such an experienced teacher to take the Normal school course. It was explained in reply that the class championed by the member for Esquimalt was actually non-existent; no third class certificate was supposed to qualify for more than a year, although it might for reason be extended to three years, after which the holder was obliged to qualify as a second-class certificate teacher. In reply to an inquiry by Mr. Hawthornthwaite as to whether or not academic qualification would entitle a teacher to a certificate independent of the Normal course, the minister replied negatively, giving as his reason that University education might not especially qualify the fortunate possessor for success in the teaching profession. The object of this legislation was primarily and altogether to improve the standard of the teaching profession, which it was aimed to make as attractive as possible, while commanding skill and special competency.

While graciously admitting that the intentions of the minister might be admirable, Mr. Hawthornthwaite maintained that the establishment of third-class life certificates would work out disadvantageously to teachers holding second or first class certificates, and who had gone to much trouble to secure such standard. This was contradicted by Hon. Dr. Young, who explained how the classes could not be brought into competition as suggested.

To Overcome Difficulties.
Premier McBride said that the government would certainly welcome any amendment making it possible to secure for the rural schools the special advantages as to teaching efficiency enjoyed by the city schools. It was to overcome difficulties in the way of securing better teachers for the rural schools that this portion of the bill was designed, while nothing in the

bill was antagonistic to the principles as to certificates prevailing in the past. The idea was that a prospective teacher should first after four months' Normal training, receive a preliminary certificate, entitling him to teach for one year, after which nine months' additional Normal training was demanded, when if the faculty of the Normal was satisfied as to the candidate's ability as a teacher, the life certificate would issue.

The committee eventually rose with a progress report. In committee on the Factories Act amendment bill, with Mr. Shaw as chairman, Mr. Hawthornthwaite moved in amendment to place within the discretion of judges the calling of the inspector as a witness. This amendment was not what he himself desired, he admitted, as he was wholly and unqualifiedly opposed to the bill. No other public official was thus exempt from his duties of citizenship. Under the Workmen's Compensation Act, as all members were aware, damages recoverable from an employing company in the event of an accident occurring in consequence of defective machinery or through other similar cause, were limited to \$1,500. As a result many actions had been brought at Vancouver under common law, and much heavier damages secured. In such actions he could well see how the inspector should be the most valuable witness. It was only through the testimony of such an official that breach of the common law could be established. He felt confident that the present legislation was not desired by any labor body, but more probably by the manufacturers' association. His suggestion was that the trial judge should be allowed discretion in saying whether or not the evidence of the inspector was to be regarded as essential to the issue.

The attorney-general was especially vigorous in reply. He pointed out how when this amendment bill had first been brought forward the member for Nanaimo had anxiously suggested that the factory inspector had most probably been a political appointee out of his (the attorney-general's) party. He had explained that the choice had been made upon the recommendation of the Trades and Labor Council, which had seemingly been very well satisfied with the results. A number of prominent labor men, some of the most representative members of that body, had only that very morning especially congratulated the government upon having been the first to introduce the Factories Act, through Mr. McPhillips, while he had been personally congratulated upon the excellent choice made in the selection of the inspector and upon the way in which the act was working out in operation. As far as the representatives of labor were concerned, it was apparent that they were entirely satisfied with the working of the act and in accord with the present amendment. The member for Nanaimo, seemingly was quite out of touch with the true labor interests. That member had not suggested that the amendment before the committee had evidently emanated with the capitalist class of whom he was so prone to create. On the contrary it had been brought in at the direct and personal request of the inspector himself, as pointed out on recommendation of the Trades and Labor Council, who found that his time was being wasted and his necessary official duties handicapped by the growing practice of calling him as an expert witness in civil damage suits, which was far from contemplated in the legislation dealing with the inspection of factories and the creation of the inspector. Nor was the member for Nanaimo any closer to the truth when he objected to the interests of the workers being prejudiced by withdrawing the inspector from eligibility as a witness; as a general rule it was the employing interest that found it wisdom to call the inspector, and his evidence was more apt to tell against the workers than otherwise. Taking the advice of the gentlemen actually representing the trades and labor organizations, it was found that they favored this amendment. In many cases where at the suggestion of the inspector, guards had been put on machinery, workmen subsequently removed them for greater convenience in operating; this fact told strongly against them in suits to recover damages. The inspector went into the box when called, and of course told the truth; as a result workmen often lost their cases and felt aggrieved against the official. The duty of the inspector was not to act as an expert witness for the benefit of civil litigants, but to find out defects in factory economy and report to the department of justice so that every precaution might be insisted upon for the safety of the lives of the workers. To promote his effectiveness along these lines it was desirable that he should be immune from service as an expert witness in such civil actions as were constantly arising.

As to the evidence of the inspector very frequently telling against the workmen pressing for damages, Mr. Hawthornthwaite said that, to his knowledge, he had never heard of his party only wanted the full production of the truth. If the inspector had not sufficient backbone to go into court and give true evidence he was unfit for his position, and should be dismissed therefrom. He still contended that the whole purpose of the bill was to prevent the workman improving his case for damages under common law proceedings.

"But," said Hon. Mr. Bawser, "the Factories Act is not essential to the prosecution of an action for damages at common law. We had such actions before this act was passed, and probably as many of them and resulting in as heavy damages being awarded as since this act has been passed."

Mr. Hawthornthwaite's further contention was that the Minister was merely humbugging labor. That the representatives of labor were as shrewd and as intelligent as any people in the land, was Hon. Mr. Bawser's response. He had not always seen exactly with them, and they had on occasion threatened him with punishment at the polls, but on the whole they seemed to appreciate his straightforward dealing with all matters affecting labor, as witness his position at the head of the poll in the largest city of the province.

Father of Act
Being especially requested by the member for Nanaimo to express his views, Mr. McPhillips, the father of the Factories Act itself, said that as the principle of the bill had been disposed of by the House in passing the second reading, he could not, of course, touch upon this in discussing the amendment offered by Mr. Hawthornthwaite. That he would destroy the principle aimed at in the bill, and any hesitation he might have had in regard to the measure originally had certainly been disposed of by the Attorney General's explanations and the support accorded to it by the House. It was true that the amending bill was without precedent so far as he was aware, but this did

not necessarily condemn it as unwise. Nor could it be fairly assumed that its operation would be inimical to the worker. There was probably more danger in the calling of the inspector as a witness, from the employee's standpoint than the employer's. When it was shown that the inspector had failed to report defects in machinery or to suggest improvements in the direction of greater safety, it might count towards absolving employers from liability to a very large extent. He was inclined to think that in a majority of cases this amending bill would prove, in its working, rather to the advantage of the workers than the employers. He did not think that the bill would destroy the principle or the utility of the act amended, while he opposed the amendment offered by the member for Nanaimo on the ground that if the legislature were to discharge and exercise its true functions it should be content to accept its responsibility for the policy of the law, and not endeavor to shift such responsibility to the shoulders of an esteemed judiciary.

Mr. Brewster and Mr. Jardine briefly supported the suggestion of the colleague from Nanaimo, the former giving it as his opinion that the House should make no change in the Factories Act as at present constituted, and holding the present amendment to be in line with the demonstrated policy of the Attorney General to get all the political machinery possible in his own control—to establish his domination as Chief of British Columbia.

The Hawthornthwaite amendment was lost, with but three favoring votes, and the committee rose to report the bill complete unamended.

NEW YORK HERALD'S COMMISSIONER HERE

Gathers Information for Articles
Upon British Columbia
In Accordance With Paper's
New Departure

The New York Herald, the first of the great United States papers to awaken to the growing importance of Canada, such as regards its internal affairs and its relation to the mother country and foreign nations, is at present represented in the city by Mr. Hamilton Pelts.

The determination of the Herald to establish an Ottawa bureau was announced in the Colonist some time ago, as well as the inception of the latter. For some time now that bureau has been gathering for the readers of the news of the capital of Canada. For months new stories and special relations have been given prominence while within the last month several articles of unusual interest have been featured in the Sunday magazine pages. An article dealing with the development of the harbor of Montreal and its possibilities for supremacy in handling the grain trade Europe-bound has excited no little comment in the press of the United States.

The latter article carried a "by line" with the name of Mr. Hamilton Pelts attached and that gentleman is in Victoria in pursuance of a mission involving further articles of similar interest and of similar importance.

He has borne to the proprietors and management of the different papers which have commented upon the Herald's action in formally entering the Canadian field of news gathering the appreciation of Mr. James Gordon Bennett, the owner of Gotham's first paper. He has gathered data and information for numerous articles upon the different portions of the Dominion and he has gained a first-hand knowledge of the extent, the resources and the possibilities of the country which has claimed for its own the Twentieth Century.

Mr. Pelts is delighted with what he has seen in Victoria. Its climate, scenery and geographical position has impressed him greatly. He will leave for the east probably about Thursday after a four weeks stay in Victoria. He left last November, which took him first east to the Atlantic seaboard and more lately westward. He has visited and spent no inconsiderable time in every province.

To Boom Hunting Grounds
Word has been received by Hon. Dr. Young from Mr. Warburton M. Pike, whose mysterious absence in the wilds of Arizona occasioned considerable alarm to his friends here, that he, who is now on his way from Yuma back to Victoria. Mr. Pike has accepted the proffered invitation of the province at the forthcoming sportsmen's show to be held in Vienna, Austria, which promises to be one of the most notable events of its character in recent history. The provincial authorities are now having printed a handsome, specially bound and especially illustrated handbook of shooting and fishing in British Columbia, which is in several European languages and will constitute one of the most attractive examples of modern publicity literature that America has yet produced.

Estate of Sir George Drummond
MONTREAL, Feb. 7.—By the will of the late Sir George Drummond, president of the Bank of Montreal, which was filed today, the estate is left unreservedly to Lady Drummond and the three sons, Huntley, Arthur and Guy, being divided equally among them, and they are also appointed executors, with Huntley Drummond, the eldest son, as administrator of the estate. Instructions are left to the executors for the payment of a number of charitable and other bequests, but these will not be made public. The value of the estate is not announced, but it is understood to be about \$4,000,000. Lady Drummond is left the use of the family mansion on Sherbrooke street, one of the finest in the city.

RULES FOR BISLEY
New Regulation in Regard to Service Rifles Proposed for This Year's Meeting

LONDON, Feb. 7.—It was announced today that the National Rifle Association, at its annual meeting at Bisley, from July 4 to 14, next, from Australia, would be present, also a contingent from the Malay states and one representing the Singapore Rifle Association.

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