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COMMUNICATIONS

Wattford, Opt, Aug. 2nd, 1924 The Editor of the Watford Guide-Advocate,

On June 30th at the regular meeting of our Watford Board of Education as you will have noticed by the last minutes, it was decided that we would not have a fifth teacher on our High School staff for the next School year, the motion having been made to advertise for a fifth teacher, which was lost.

This decision was arrived at, after

the Board had read over letters from Secretaries of other High School Boards and Boards of Education employing four and five teachers and after having read a letter from F. W Merchant, Acting Deputy Minister of Education, who was one time Principal of London Collegiate Institute and afterwards also a Principal of a Normal School. Mr. Marchant's letand the other letters referred to Watt says were taken away by some person and threfore I had to get a copy of Mr. Merchant's letter from the Department of Education. The following is a copy of Mr. Merchant's letter:

Toronto, June 20th, 1924 I am directed by the Minister of Education to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of recent date re garding the staff of the Watford High School and in reply to state that, in view of the conditions he will be satisfied with a staff of four teachers, if the total enrolment does not exceed 120 pupils.

It would appear advisable to appoint at present only four teachers. Then, if it is found at the re-opening of the High Shoool that the envolment exceeds 120, the advice of the High School Inspector concerned should be obtained as to a fifth

teacher. I have the honor to be, Your obedient servant. (Sgd) F. W. Merhcant Acting Deputy Minister of Education.

W. E. Fitzgerald, Esq., Chairman, High School Board,

Watford, Ontario. At a special meeting of our Board of Education held on July 21st, some members of the Board wanted to re-consider the matter to still have a fifth teacher, notwithstanding it was decided not to have one before and at last there was a motion passed School Inspector, to see what he had to say about it, he having inspected our High School and knew the cirthe matter came up at our regular down. meeting of our Board of Education and notwithstanding Mr. Levan's letter and the letters ceived from other High Schools and Collegiate Institutes that had four and five teachers, showing that they had more attendance per teacher than we had, a motion was made that we advertise for a fifth teacher for our High School. A copy of Mr. Levan's letter is as follows: Toronto, July 25th, 1924 Mr. D. Watt,

Secretary, High School Board, Watford, Ont.

Dear Sir:

Your letter addressed to the Deputy Minister of Education several weeks ago was referred to me for a recommendation and the letter you receivd in reply from Dr. Merchant embodied my views on your situation in Watford.

The question hinges, I may say, on the attendance you are likely to have next September. My rcommendation (contained in Dr. Merchant's letter to you) was based on the assumption that the attendance in September was likely to be the same as when I visited the school, viz. 121 pupils. While this number is slightly over the ratio of 30 to 1, prescribed in the Regulations, it is so slightly in excess that the Inspector would not make it a reason for demanding a fifth teacher. It would involve, I know, some inconvenience, more particularly that of seating the Upper School in the Science laboratory and requiring them to go to the room vacated when another class needed to use the laboratory. This is an inconvenience, undoubtedly, but I die not deem it so great an inconvenience as the breaking up of the school into two parts almost % of a mile apart and the payment of \$1400 or \$1500 additional in salary. This opinion, I say, was based on the assumption that the attend-nce would not increase. If the attendance should increase, I recommended that the Inspector should be con

I think the whole matter turns on the attendance you expect in September next. If there is a reasonable certainty that the attendance will increase to say 135, you will undoubtedly have to provide a fifth teacher.

Your Board is better acquainted than I am with the prospects for the coming year. It is easier to get a good teacher now than it will be in September. If a fifth teacher is required in September and is not on hand, there will necessarily be an unsatis-factory organization and a consequence slowing up of the work of the

THE WATFORD GUIDE-ADVOCATE

chool for three or four weeks. My conclusion is that if there is a reasonable certainty of there being an attendance of 135 pupils in September, you would be acting in the best interests of the School in engaging a fifth teacher now. If the attendance is not likely to be more than 120, you can manage, though inconvenience, I admit, with a staff of four teachers.

(Sgd.) I. M. Levan. I consider that the ratepayers and citizens of Watford should know the facts of this matter. I voted against having a fifth teacher and stated that if it was necessary to have a fifth teacher then we could advertise for one, when we found there was a necessity for doing so and after the School opened in September.

At the regular meeting of our Board in May, our High School Principal, stated that we had then 112 on the roll and 104 of an average attendance. This fact was also before our Board and it may not be possible that we will have sufficient in Sep tember when we open to have a fifth teacher. Mr. Levan says, 135. If we do, it is time enough then to adver-tise for a fifth teacher, instead of causing our ratepayers more taxes to pay and they are too high now, high er than any place I know of in Western Ontario, and it is a detriment to our Town the high taxes we are paying and it is time to try and economize wherever we can.

I also brought up at our Board meetings the question of having only four teachers instead of five in our Public School, but no action was taken in this respect, notwithstanding there is not a School in Western Ontario that has the same number of teachers for the same number of pupils that we have. We can quite easily get along with four teachers and here we would save more money that we would not have to raise in taxes. It certainly is time that we begin to economize in matters that effect the taxes of the Town. I know, the fact is, that many people are hesitating coming to reside in Watford because of the high taxes and that the Secretary of our Board should write to Mr. Levan, High go ahead, we must not have our taxgo ahead, we must not have our taxes go any higher, but lower. I trust this will explain why I have taken the stand I have on the Board of Edu cumstances. He wrote a letter and cation, in trying to get the taxes Yours sincerely,

W. E. Fitzgerald.



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