

of 1917. Nova Scotia amended and greatly improved its attendance law in 1916, while Alberta in 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918 added to and amended its law until it has now one of the best and most effective attendance laws in Canada. They have made education compulsory to the age of 16 years.

The province of Ontario has in comparatively recent years inaugurated a system of Continuation Schools. Her educational leaders are now advocating compulsory attendance at these schools for children from 14-16 years of age. In advocating this step the Director of Industrial and Technical Education for Ontario says: "AN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IS NECESSARY AS A FOUNDATION FOR ALL FORMS OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. But it is evident that, no matter how perfect the system (of vocational education), the aims to be realized cannot be attained unless the attendance of those to be educated can be secured for THE COMPLETE COURSE OFFERED."

The compulsory school law of Ontario, being an old law, is admittedly defective. Year after year it has been a dead letter in many rural sections. There has been strong criticism in the Ontario legislature of its non-effectiveness, a criticism led by Mr. Proudfoot. He believes the remedy to lie in making the attendance officers the appointees of the school authorities instead of the police commission. The Department of Education, in opposing Mr. Proudfoot's bill, admitted defects, but apparently did not agree that his bill was a complete remedy. They asked that the bill be withdrawn on the ground that the department was studying the whole matter carefully.

The Hon. Dr. Cody, the new Minister of Education for Ontario, in a recent speech before his constituents in Toronto stated that in his opinion public sentiment (in Ontario) after the war would demand the extension of the Compulsory School Age to 16 years. In a later speech he is reported as saying, "I consider it most uneconomical to chop off education at the age of 14; in doing that we are not getting value for the money spent." In view of the foregoing statements of the Department and of Dr. Cody, we may reasonably look for the superseding of the present antiquated law of our sister province by an effective modern law at no distant date.

But material welfare, essential as it is, is not the only objective to be reached by more and better education of the youth of a democracy. Mr. Fisher has said, "No people which does not respect education will demand and support good government". Dr. Claxton puts it this way, "Democracy requires for success universal knowledge, intelligence

and virtue of a high degree, and it must protect itself from weakness and corruption within as well as from forceful invasion without".

If then, as we see, there is a general recognition elsewhere of the necessity of a higher general standard of education, how are we in this province responding? What have we done and what are we going to do to fit our boys and girls to meet the competition of their better educated competitors of the sister provinces and of foreign countries?

Can it be that we in Quebec feel we have reached the ultimate goal in our provisions for an intelligent citizenry and skilled workmen, who who stand perhaps alone among the democracies of the earth in retaining school fees as one means of support for our elementary schools and in the lack of any legislation requiring our children to attend school?

But perhaps conditions of attendance, as has been so often claimed, are so good that we do not need a School Attendance Law. Let us examine the validity of this claim.

THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SITUATION IN QUEBEC.

From the beginning your committee has been mindful of the fact that there has been much improvement in educational facilities in this province in recent years. It has not been forgetful of the deep interest taken in educational matters by the government and especially by the Prime Minister; of the greatly increased grants for better buildings, equipment and teaching; of the steps taken to encourage technical training through building a number of handsome, splendidly equipped technical schools. The very substantial progress made in the matter of providing better training for teachers, modernizing the course of study, increasing salaries, building and equipping modern fireproof schools in the urban centers and better schools in the rural sections, have not failed to impress all with the evidence that the Province of Quebec offers splendid opportunities TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE AND HAVE THE MEANS TO take advantage of them. But through daily contact with the situation the committee were persuaded that the youth of the Province have not been getting anywhere near the full benefit of these facilities. Such a condition of affairs is a millstone around the neck of progress; as the head of the New York Bureau of Attendance has said, "Expenditure on school buildings and equipment may be lavish, courses of study may be modernized, methods of instruction may be vitalized, school management may be vibrant with a social consciousness, but all these fail unless in the last analysis the