

Teachers' Salaries.

THE question of teachers' salaries in the Toronto public schools comes up with unfailing regularity upon the election of every new School Board, until it is looked upon as a wolf cry by the parties concerned.

In the present instance, however, it seems to have reached an acute stage which may indicate action in the early future.

The question is an exceedingly difficult one. The present method of grading salaries is not perfect; indeed it is open to grave defects, but whether any of the methods of reform proposed would be an improvement is extremely problematic. Under the present system a teacher is paid by length of service—except she be a principal—and without regard to merit. But it must be remembered that her salary is commensurate with a very moderate merit only.

A teacher—any teacher in the Toronto public schools, be she good or indifferent, and of course a certain standard of merit is insisted upon—must be in the employ of the board for fifteen years before she receives the maximum salary of twelve dollars per week; and after that if she teaches fifteen years more her salary remains the same.

There are very few young men of equal social and educational standing who would be content to be told on entering a business firm that if they served faithfully for fifteen years they would reach an income of \$12 per week, and there remain.

The chief weakness of the present system is not that it pays too much to poor teachers, whose work it is worth a place in our schools at all is surely worth eight or ten dollars per week, but that it shuts the chief stimulus from experienced teachers, who, beginning work at eighteen or twenty, are in the prime of their value and vigor at thirty-five.

Regarding the system proposed, the insuperable difficulty is that of correctly gauging a teacher's merit from reports, especially reports made by the principal.

With all due acknowledgments to the sincere and able principals in the Toronto schools, it is a fact well known by trustees, inspectors, as well as by the teaching staff, that there are teachers in the schools to-day who are in advance of many of the principals in method, discipline, teaching ability, and power of character.

Are the principals in a position to report correctly concerning these?

Again, the routine of school life is prejudicial in effect upon many men. They grow narrow, petty, dogmatic. There are constant little frictions and jars occurring between teachers and such principals which prevent fair or just views of each other.

Again, can the principals report justly in such a case?

These are not suppositions but facts, and must be borne in mind in the endeavor to adopt an equitable salary scheme.

If the inspectors only are called upon to do the reporting: there are two inspectors and about six hundred classes. Making six visits per day, they would see each teacher about four times in the year.

Would that be sufficient to enable them to gauge the teacher's work with sufficient degree of fineness to decide whether she should have \$24 (the yearly rate of increase) added to or taken from her slender salary?

We have no plan to propose, but are simply indicating points to be most carefully guarded.

And there is one thing to remember: the teacher's best guarantee of worth lies in his or her character. It is that which will educate her pupils and lead them out and up; it is that which will influence them toward the things which are true and lovely and of good report.

Let the school board devise some measure, if it can, that will gauge the character of the teachers, and the question of \$25, less or more, will disappear.

Women Miners.

IN mine promoting and developing, and also in mine brokerage, women of good business ability may prove equally as successful as in investment.

* * *

During the month of February we have had a woman mining broker in Toronto in the person of Miss Leigh Spencer.

Miss Spencer has an office in Nanaimo, B.C., and is well known throughout the mining country as an authoritative and successful broker. She came east early in February to dispose of mining stocks, and will visit Montreal and probably Ottawa before her return.

Miss Spencer combines a genial and marked personality with exceptional business ability. She is largely interested in a number of mines, and may be considered an authority upon the subject.

Naturally, she has a number of women among her clientele.

"I usually advise women to invest in developed properties," she says, "a list of which can always be found in the papers. Prospecting companies are a greater risk.

"I do not care to sell women low-priced stocks. One came to me recently and wanted to invest \$100 in three-cent stocks. Her sole idea was to get as many shares as she could for the money. I told her I hadn't any to sell her, and gave her some advice on the point, but she went away to find three-cent stocks of any kind. But if a woman is silly enough to offer herself for plucking in this manner, she must not be surprised to find herself shorn.

"Although I have hundreds of women come to me desiring to invest, I neither solicit their custom nor in any way urge the investment. They invariably have sought me voluntarily in person or by letter. Men brokers are usually able to say the same thing.

"A clear headed business woman is perfectly capable of going into mining in any department. And it is nothing new that she should handle stocks well.

"I am personally acquainted with an English lady of means who has entire control of a very valuable property in the Slocan district. She intends employing a practical foreman and will develop the property herself, with the financial assistance of two or three other Englishmen. She has also invested profitably in city property in B.C., and is a silent partner in a paying enterprise other than mining in the same province.

"I am also acquainted with another woman who by a fortunate investment of \$120 some time ago in the Kootenay, has now a property worth \$17,000, from which she draws dividends at regular intervals.

"This of course is an exceptional case. But that women of good business tact can secure valuable mining properties is proved by a recent instance of a woman I know out West. Her husband being incapacitated by ill-health, she turned her attention to mining matters and secured a valuable property, the sale of which is now being negotiated at a large figure in England.

"My advice to a woman investor may be summed up in a few words:—

"Let her make up her mind what she can afford to lose, that is, what she can lose without crippling her resources.

"If she has men friends of good business standing let her consult them.

"Let her look to the standing of her broker and directorate.

"If the advertisements of a company are very glaring and extensive, if the officers are salaried, if expenditure is lavish, women would be wise to remember that these moneys come out of the shareholders' pockets. Companies that are solid and desirous of developing, husband their resources.

"If a woman investor selects a good company

and reputable broker, and scatters her money, she is not likely to lose even if she does not make a profit. But if she is really anxious not to lose, it is wise to sell half her stock when it doubles in price and recoup her expense, leaving the remainder invested."

Miss Spencer believes that the mining boom is only beginning. A residence of several years in the mining districts of British Columbia has wrought in her a belief that the mining resources of that country are practically untouched as yet.

It is not a question whether women should invest or not. They are investing more extensively every week. This month a large number of letters have been received by Toronto brokers from women in the United States who desire to invest.

After careful note we are able to assert that brokers of good standing use their best judgment in advising women investors.



Victorian Order of Home Helpers.

IN accordance with Her Majesty's expressed desire, the various schemes adopted throughout the Empire to commemorate her sixtieth year of reign will take philanthropic form.

While many municipalities will devise a local memorial, it seems eminently fitting that a national memorial should also be raised in each kingdom and colony of the Empire—one worthy of the splendid event we celebrate, and also fitting tribute to the tender womanliness that belongs to our most gracious Sovereign Lady.

The scheme devised by the Countess of Aberdeen, and which is explained in detail on another page, is one that combines both these characteristics, and as such is worthy of being adopted as the national scheme of Canada.

A somewhat similar work is carried on in a small way in Toronto in the Nursing at Home Mission, and those who have practical knowledge of its value to the sick poor, realize best the splendid possibilities of such a work on a larger scale, and in our sparsely populated districts.

Next to our heroic pioneers themselves, only those who have travelled in the new lands of Canada realize the vast need of such aid.

It is not our purpose to go into detail concerning this need. But one strong reason may be urged to make this a national scheme—that in the establishment of such a nursing order and its effective working, pioneer life would lose half its terrors, and many families be thereby induced to move into the great waiting places of our country.

Concerning the cost of the scheme: If it be accepted as a national scheme endorsed by Parliament, there will be no difficulty in raising the million dollars required, since every municipality will contribute its share. If an erroneous impression prevail that this splendid scheme is the fad of a few, the fund will be difficult to raise.

There should be a clear and definite understanding concerning it. No other proposal approaching it in suitability has been brought before the Canadian people. It should be accepted heartily and with rejoicing, inasmuch as it is for our own to aid our own. Yet it is also in many ways a fit memorial to lay at the feet of our Queen.

We might suggest here that the name chosen is somewhat cumbersome and lacks euphony. There is much in a name, especially in questions of popular appeal the 'Victorian Order of Nurses' would probably define the purpose of the scheme more clearly and be more easily understood by the people than the 'Victorian Order of Home Helpers.'

