

Is The Government Neglecting Canada's Youth?

Starvation Salaries for Teachers Are Destroying the Efficiency of the "Little Red Schoolhouse" and Endangering the Entire Fabric of Our Educational System---Some Figures That Startle---Should the Nation Act?



THE WAR taught one lesson more profoundly than another, it was the need for education. Never, indeed, in any period of the world's history have the responsibilities and requirements of nations more clearly demanded the placing of the school upon a plane of efficient service. It is the clearest, the greatest, the most vital challenge in the realm of world reconstruction.

An exposition of the need for education is not, however, the purpose of this article. An exposition is not necessary. As an abstract proposition, the statement that education is a vital necessity is never seriously questioned. What the writer has in view is demonstration of the fact that Canada to-day is faced by a problem which, in the opinion of the most competent educationists, goes to the very roots of our educational difficulties, and which, if its challenge be not taken up, threatens the entire fabric of our educational system. This problem, summed up in a few words, is the question of teachers' salaries. To-day one can hardly pick up a newspaper without reading how in some centre of the Dominion (the trouble is not confined to any single section of the country), school teachers are demanding more adequate salaries or threatening to go on strike. Why is this? Why is it that the teaching profession, which demands, or ought to demand, the highest form of intelligence and capacity, and which involves the most important type of public and social service, is thus underpaid? Why is it that recruits for the teaching profession are becoming fewer and fewer, that the character and calibre of the average school teacher are upon a lower plane than a decade ago, and that the teaching profession, once a permanent calling, is now but a transitory pursuit? The answer, I think, is this: That we Canadians, while professing with other democracies a devotion to education, have been so engrossed in purely commercial and material pursuits, that we have almost unconsciously regarded knowledge as a secondary and subsidiary thing, permitting educational questions, including the status of the profession of teaching, to have but little place in our minds. In other words, in our mad pursuit of Mammon, in our glorification, as it were, of the cash register, we have created among our people an instinctive disrespect for teaching as a profession, thereby setting up the greatest handicap which confronts educational progress in this powerful and prosperous democracy.

And most unfortunately for the welfare of the Nation, the service of teaching is becoming progressively less attractive. The time was when teaching,

By A PROMINENT EDUCATIONIST

while not highly honoured as a permanent calling, was at least looked upon as a thoroughly respectable and even desirable temporary occupation for capable young men, who needed to earn a little money toward preparation for a real profession. To teach for a term or two in a district school, or for a year or two in an academy, was considered to be quite a com-

TO PARENTS—

Your children are not receiving proper educational advantages. This article outlines the appalling conditions possibly in YOUR community. A Federal Bureau of Education is the remedy. Write us to-day. Tell us the state of educational affairs in your village, town or city. Only by concentrated appeal can reforms be effected.

TO TEACHERS—

What is lacking in your school? Is your salary sufficient for your living requirements? Do you get proper co-operation from your school board to bring about necessary improvements? How far is your school from your place of residence? What assistance could the Government give you? Write us. We may be able to help you.

STARTLING FACTS—

The percentage of illiterates in Australia is 1.08.
The percentage of illiterates in New South Wales is 2.
The percentage of illiterates in Queensland is 2.05.
The percentage of illiterates in the United States is 7.07.
The percentage of illiterates in Canada is 11.45.

mendable means for turning an honest penny. And even up to comparatively recent years when the lower schools were given over very largely to women, teaching became the one conventionally approved remunerative occupation in which a girl could await matrimony.

As time passed on the public conviction that teaching is at best only a transitory calling for either men or women became a fixed tradition. Social and economic forces have been favourable to its cumulative growth. The supply of temporary teachers

up to about ten years ago overtopped the demand, hence wages could be kept low. The girls usually lived with their parents, and their earnings were often more in the nature of pin money than of a living and saving wage. Public education, indeed, has been far from burdensome to the taxpayer. The entire schooling of the average Canadian citizen, it has been computed, has cost the public less than one hundred and fifty dollars—an amount comparable perhaps with that which the village grocer invests in his daughter's piano lessons.

Nor is a low wage scale the only sorry result of the tradition that teaching is not a serious business. Standards of preparation have been kept low. In general, the requirements for a teacher's license in any community have been those that the average girl graduating from the local school could easily meet. To advance requirements beyond this point would mean that the local girls must go elsewhere for preparation, and this would automatically place appointments in the local schools beyond the reach of the larger part of the otherwise available "home talent." And so any attempt to raise standards for the teacher's license to the point where adequate preparation would be required is met at once by "pressure" from the numerous groups of families that have come to look upon teaching appointments in the local schools as the vested right of their daughters.

A National Scandal

UNDER these conditions, it is not surprising that the material rewards of public school service have become all but a national scandal, and amount to an educational crisis. And in all of the Provinces the situation is equally bad. In Ontario—where the lower educational salaries are about the average in the Dominion—the conditions are thus graphically set out by a recent newspaper report. It says:

"The investigation made by Superintendent Cody into the financial affairs of the school teachers, while not all complete, discloses a serious condition. Some of the teachers suffer from an actual deficit, which means that they are living partly on the savings of other years. Not only are they not making any provision for their old age, but they are actually getting poorer and poorer each year. And to make matters worse, most of these have dependents. How can a teacher take a proper interest in her work when it does not pay her a living wage? There are others, too, who are just able to live on their salaries, but are unable to put anything aside.

"But there are worse

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Sovereigns Who No Longer Reign



EX-KING NICHOLAS of Montenegro is now living in Italy with his wife, Ex-Queen Melina, and their family. He fought heroically with his brave little army for the Allied cause, but his tiny country was overrun by the Austrians, and since the war a revolution has deprived him of his throne. His chances of coming back are, however, much brighter than those of the other ex-royalties. His eldest daughter is the Queen of Italy.



MR. WILLIAM Hohenzollern, formerly of Berlin, and now of Holland. Owing to the chilliness of the Berlin atmosphere, Mr. Hohenzollern was forced to change his abode. It is understood that Mr. Hohenzollern suffered largely of delusions of world dominion and equality with "Gott." At present the Ex-Emperor wears a beard, dresses in civilian clothes, "says nothing, and saws wood."

EX-QUEEN Sophie of Greece, sister of the Kaiser and a great believer in "Deutschland über alles" and when it came out of the war "under allies" instead, she and her husband retired to private life.



EX-KING Constantine of Greece looks quite like a private gentleman in this photograph, which was taken in Paris during a recent visit. Constantine now lives in a small house in Switzerland and wishes he had guessed right as to who would win the war and not backed his Geraoca brother-in-law, the Kaiser, quite so heavily.



THE EX-KING, or Czar of Bulgaria, as he preferred to be called, backed the wrong side and was asked by his people to step down from his tottering throne. He is now mixing in ex-royal circles in Switzerland. Ferdinand was not a Bulgarian but an obscure German prince, a younger son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, when in 1887 he was chosen by the great powers of Europe to rule over a state but lately freed from Turkish dominion.



MR. AND MRS. HAPSBURG, formerly leading citizens of Vienna are now living a retired life in Switzerland. Before defeat menaced the Austrian Armies and a revolution drove them from the throne, this pleasant looking couple were known as the Emperor Karl Franz Joseph of Austria, and King of Hungary, and his wife was the Empress Zita.

THE EX-EMPRESS EUGENIE lost her throne nearly fifty years before the great war. She reached her ninety-third year early in December. She lives in England but visits France frequently where she has a villa at Cap Martin. Her husband was Emperor Napoleon III. Eugenie is immensely wealthy, but has led a very quiet and retired life for nearly fifty years. In her youth, when she was simply Eugenie de Montijo, Countess of Teba, a gypsy prophesied that she would one day be a queen and live to be 100 "a little more or less."

