

salary in the West, it does not mean such a princely income as one would at first imagine. It is next to impossible for a young lady to find room and board in a city such as Calgary or Vancouver at less than \$35 per month, unless, perhaps, she succeeds in clubbing with other girls and rents a suite of rooms and prepares her own meals.

The salaries here for men start at \$860 to \$1,320 per annum, according to position held, and increase to a maximum of \$2,160 to \$2,400 per annum. Lady teachers start at \$660 to \$720 and reach a maximum of \$900 to \$960, according to position. In the high school the ladies receive from \$1,080 to \$1,440, but these positions are naturally assigned to men wherever possible.

Owing to the rainy season and the short period of daylight during the winter months, the school hours vary. In spring and fall the public schools run from 9 to 3.30, with morning and afternoon recesses. In winter, 9.30 to 3, with morning recess only. The high school runs from 9 to 3 throughout the year.

The texts in the elementary schools are very similar to those of New Brunswick, but the organization of our course of study is not nearly so complete. The readers, geography and grammar are the same in British Columbia, Alberta and New Brunswick.

The free-text system has been adopted in British Columbia and Alberta. In the latter province the texts which are supplied free become the property of the pupils receiving them, while in British Columbia they are merely loaned to the pupils and must be handed in at the close of the school year or upon leaving school. On account of pupils being forced to use books previously used by others, it is not uncommon to find from sixty to eighty per cent. of a class supplying their own books. The Alberta system works out much better in practice and is a source of far less worry to the teachers. None of the western provinces have reached the stage where they select school texts because of their cheapness, and it is to be hoped for the sake of our schools that it will be a long time before political squabbling shall enter the arena of our public schools. Politicians may understand the construction of railroads and the development of the country's resources generally, but I fear too few of them have the educational qualifications to enable them to determine from a psychological standpoint what is best for the education of the youth of the land. In Alberta politics do not enter into

the schools, the highest appointments at the disposal of the government being given to the men best qualified to fill the positions.

The West has room for many first-rate teachers who are willing to put forth their best energies in a new and rapidly developing country. The chances of advancement for efficient teachers are better here than in the East, but the incompetent may as well remain where they are.

H. P. DOLE.

Lord Roberts School, Vancouver, B. C.

Concert Recitation.

To the Editor:—The contribution on concert recitation in the January REVIEW implies, in my opinion, all that is desirable to say on the subject. The method of analysis, now in general use, teaches the sentence as a whole, then the separate words of the sentences, and lastly the letters of the words, so that the knowledge of letters is imparted through the spelling and does not precede it.

But a question may arise, and evidently this is the point at issue in the question,—should not a series of lessons be given at the beginning of the first school year, in which a knowledge of the letters is imparted as the primary object; and should not this work be completed, before the spelling as such begins? I do not believe it is in accordance with any authorized method to proceed otherwise.

By means of a daily oral drill of fifteen or twenty minutes a class can be taught the oral spelling of a great number of words without a sight knowledge of the letter names. B-i-r-d, bird; b-i-r-d, bird; s-i-n-g-s, sings; s-i-n-g-s, sings; and the pupils do not know r from g, or bird from sings, if called upon to distinguish them in the printed or written forms. Now, is it not mainly the deceptive concert work which makes this a possibility, and even a probability?

Visualization will, doubtless, come later on, and the spelling thus learned may not be useless. Nevertheless, this is a very objectionable plan, and the principal objection is not the shocking waste of time involved, but the deadening effect of this protracted mechanical work on the minds of the pupils. They have been ground in the mill, so to speak. With what difficulty will these children afterwards be led to take a genuine interest in real, live school work!

In regard to the promotion of pupils of the first grade, I wonder if it is wise, in view of these facts, to make oral spelling the sole spelling test.

Charlottetown, P. E. I.

B. M. T.