

higher classes and the practical abolition of illiteracy. The utility of such a law is proved by such a consensus gentium; and those whose judgment in this matter is worth the most are the ones who have tried faithfully to carry out such a law. Such peoples and many others are improving their attendance laws for the benefit of the children; Quebec with all its need has none to improve.

### RECENT MOVEMENTS ELSEWHERE TOWARD MORE AND BETTER EDUCATION

The war has accentuated the demand for more education for the children of the common people as being essential to the economic and political welfare of any country.

Some months ago, in speaking of conditions after the war, Mr. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, said that when the soldiers returned after the war, they would undoubtedly demand that the England for which they had made such sacrifices should be a better England than it had been in the past with better and more nearly equal advantages for all; continuing he said, "Obviously the first requirement of a better England must be Better Education and especially MORE EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE PEOPLE". It is evident that the Members of the Parliament are in agreement with that statement for they have since passed the Fisher Educational Bill. This legislation provides among other things for £3,200,000 (\$16,000,000) per year of "new money" for higher salaries (better teachers) and pensions for the teachers of the elementary schools. The bill abolishes half time attendance, restricts the employment of children, establishes a school-leaving age of 14 without exception, provides for the extension of compulsory attendance to 15 at the option of the local authorities, and enacts compulsory attendance in continuation schools to the extent of 280 hours instruction per year up to the age of 16 years for the present and eventually after a lapse of seven years to the age of 18.

In Scotland the school-leaving age is being raised to 15, and provision is being made such that no person shall for lack of means be deprived of the fullest education of which he is capable.

Just before the war Belgium adopted a compulsory school attendance law. The question had been advocated in that country since about 1882 by the Liberal party; but they combined obligatory attendance with neutral schools, thereby undoubtedly postponing the adoption of the former. The Attendance Law was passed in May, 1914 by the Catholic ministry of Baron de Broqueville: the strenuous opposition of the aged leader of the ultra-conservative wing of the Catho-

lic party was finally overcome and in the Legislature Mr. Woste was a strong supporter of the measure. The fact that provided the strongest reason for the adoption of the law was the persistently large number of illiterates found year after year in the successive classes of military recruits. Adjoining and nearby countries had through effective school attendance laws reduced illiteracy to a minimum.

It is to be noted that the Belgian Elementary Educational System allows the greatest possible freedom both active and passive; the new law made no radical change except in the one matter of attendance at school being obligatory, the choice of school being left entirely to the parent as before.

Shortly after the entrance of the U.S. into the war, her educational leaders, alarmed by the falling off in school attendance and the increase in juvenile crime in the other warring countries, took counsel. As a result, every effort was made by the educational authorities and all whom they could influence, to see that there should be no curtailment of provisions for education and the regular attendance of the children in the schools. The U.S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. P. P. Claxton, issued an appeal, a clarion call to the nation and the nation's leaders in the pulpit, the factory, and the home, asking that all should unite in keeping up the standard of education and the regular attendance of pupils. He said, "When the war is over, whether in a few months or after many years, there will be such demands upon this country for men and women of scientific knowledge, technical skill and general culture as have never before come to any country. The world must be rebuilt. This country must play a far larger part than it has in the past in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce, and also in the things of cultural life, art, literature, music, and scientific discovery."

If we in Canada, if we in old Quebec, are to attain to any important position in the world that is to be, do not these things apply equally to us?

In the United States as in Canada, Education is a function of the state parliament, not that of the federal government. Nevertheless, as an evidence of its growing realization of how directly national welfare and progress depend on the adequate education of its citizens, Congress passed in 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act. This act sets aside \$38,000,000 of federal money to be spent in eight years on account of salaries for teachers in vocational and industrial schools.

In Canada, since the war began, two provinces, the last two except our own, have placed school attendance acts for the first time upon their statute books; Manitoba in March, 1916; Saskatchewan in the spring