

Pensions for Public School Teachers.

In Nova Scotia, this subject is now exciting much attention. It was introduced at the Provincial Educational Association at Truro last year in an able paper by Principal O'Hearn. Since that time it has been discussed in the provincial papers and at the various conventions of teachers. In his book on the German schools Dr. Seeley has an excellent article of which we give the substance mostly in his own words:

The acknowledged model of modern systems of pensioning state officers in general, and public school teachers in particular, is that of Germany. She pensions not only her military, but also her civil officials on a plan similar to that of the teachers. [In Canada the same system is followed in the civil service and in many civic corporations.] It is certain that pensions for teachers is but just to them, and would work great good for the schools. The recent movements in various cities and states show that the subject is securing attention.

The state should assume the responsibility of pensions. If left to the community, no teacher well along in years could obtain a position, as every community would be bound to avoid saddling themselves with those who would soon become pensioners. Thus the service of the ripest and best years of a man's life would be lost to the country.

We might expect the following benefits from a well-conducted system of pensioning:

1. It would encourage the best men and women to enter teaching and devote their whole lives to it, thereby increasing the number of teachers of experience and maturity.

2. It would give a permanency to the calling of teaching now sadly lacking, in that it would offer an added incentive to those who have begun to continue in the work.

3. It would give assurance which would remove anxiety concerning the future, and thereby enable all the powers of mind and body to be devoted to the school room and to the interests of pupils.

4. It would recognize the teachers as state officers, thereby adding to their influence in the community.

5. It would tend to systematize educational interests, and thus add to their efficiency and success.

6. It would necessitate the fixing of a definite and higher standard of fitness for those who are to have the benefit of pensions, as the state would necessarily require a return for its investment; this could be assured only by high requirements of preparation and pedagogical fitness.

An Object Lesson.

Election times are at hand and there is more or less political discussion and excitement in every district in Canada. The question of bribery is frequently referred to and it is some satisfaction to know that it is always in public condemned by all parties. In private there can be no doubt but that votes are bought and sold, and in not a few quarters is this looked upon so leniently that there is danger lest public sentiment be rendered so callous, that the enormity of the offence be lost sight of.

The teachers in the public schools who mould the minds of the future voters of the country are not without responsibility in the matter and should not cease to inculcate their pupils with correct ideas of public morality. Some teachers may inquire as to the nature of such lessons and the proper light in which to present them. The *Montreal Star* in a recent article on "A Betrayal of Trust" among other things says:

The man who sells his vote sells property which he does not own, but of which he is the trustee. What this sort of thing is called in the case of property of a more tangible kind, one may learn by searching in the books that deal with criminal law. A trustee very often has full power over the property left in his hands; but if he sell it and pocket the proceeds, he is not an honest man. This mistaken belief that a man's vote is a part of his personal property, the disposal of which is the concern of no one but himself, constitutes the excuse in many a man's judgment for the acceptance of a bribe.

But if a man is hazy on this point and wants to know the true nature of the franchise, let him sell his vote openly, as he would his horse, and then see how quickly the community will withdraw the power of which he has been made a trustee.

"Why did the community make me the trustee of such a power?" one might fancy an unthinking voter to ask, "I never applied for it." He might as well ask why he is made to behave in an orderly manner on the streets, alleging that it was not of his volition that he came into the world.

To urge that all political parties buy votes or that men in high places are bribed by positions of emolument or power, does not in the least palliate the crime of violating one's conscience and conviction.

Let the teachers then deal with this along with other moral topics, and the seed sown now may bear fruit in future years at least, and who can tell but that it may have an influence in the present as well. Parents are influenced by their children. There is no man so depraved as to barter openly for his vote and who is not secretly ashamed to have taken money for it.

With this as the recognized sentiment of the people a very little influence only is needed to turn the scale in many cases.