

THE **COLUMN** by Ed BELL

People are funny. Especially funny are the people of this province . . . except that the word "funny" does not apply . . . it should be "pathetic". Hundreds of new schools and gymnasiums have been built in New Brunswick in the last few years, at expenditures of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. All this is very well . . . the people and the governments will spare no cost to provide school space for the pupils of New Brunswick. The point is . . . what kind of teachers staff these schools.

This column is not intended to be a criticism of the teachers in our elementary and high schools. In fact, it's more that we should sympathize with them. Teachers here are underpaid and under-trained. They work with outdated texts that fail to provide the basic training that students need from schools today. This is not a particularly novel view . . . it is shared by almost every teacher and by the various institutions that receive our pupils after they finish high school.

The origin of most of our trouble is in our teacher training school . . . Teachers' College. The standards are low, both for entrance and for studies while there. The result . . . people who can't get work and have not got the marks to get into any other place of "higher learning" go to Teachers' College . . . and in ten months are prepared (as far as the province is concerned) to go out and teach in our schools. Their salaries as beginners are so low as to barely provide living expenses.

The net result of our teacher-training and salary set-ups is that we are not getting our best teaching potential into our school system. Perhaps the poor salary is the main reason . . . no matter how much a person might want to teach, he is not very much encouraged by the prospect of a lifetime of poverty. It is strange that, while the people of New Brunswick will spend almost any amount to build schools, they will not pay teaching salaries high enough to encourage the people who should be teaching to choose this vocation. And, worse still, the people who do go to college to learn to teach get a much less extensive course than they should. In the State of Maine, one goes to school for four years before getting a first class teacher's license. As a result, their normal schools are attended only by the people who really want to teach . . . and not by those who do not want to be bored with the prospect of an idle winter.

Please do not misunderstand me . . . there are many good teachers, with integrity and pride in their work, who have graduated from Teachers' College. But the training there should be of such quality and duration that every person who graduates should be such a teacher. It is much to the credit of Teachers' College that they have instituted a two-year course to train better some of the students . . . it will be more to their credit when the two-year course is made compulsory for all T.C. students. Then more people will attend who intend to make teaching a permanent career.

It is generally agreed that New Brunswick schools are not adequately preparing our students for university training. One reason is that few teachers themselves have any concrete idea of what a university requires from a student. Another is that the subject matter taught is in many cases inadequate or outdated. Science courses in New Brunswick high schools are prime examples of this . . . and much of the trouble could be eliminated by the simple expedient of providing new text in up-to-date editions. Another course which is practically useless as taught in most of our schools is French. Teachers are not trained to teach oral French . . . and any language must be learned orally. The language is taught with the emphasis on reading and writing, with the implication that one can learn to speak it properly later. This is as ridiculous as expecting a baby to be able to read and write before he begins to talk. The result of all this is that New Brunswick students memorize a few rules in French grammar, memorize a few translations, . . . and promptly forget the whole works. Wasted time . . . wasted teaching.

This may have sounded like a wholesale condemnation of our New Brunswick educational system. It is not. It is simply an attempt to point out some of the flaws and to suggest possible means of correction. In all fairness to our system, this problem exists all over North America . . . but there is no reason why we should fall behind in doing something about it.

THINGS YOU MAY NOTICE:

- Watch *The Column* for the tale of Freddy Freshman.
- Our little porker was carefully treated, not crucified, and is now being raised by a friend. Watch *The Brunswickan* for pictures of the progress and growth of the Aitken mascot.

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CREATIVE ARTS COMMITTEE PLANS ACTIVE SEASON

The Creative Arts Committee is a committee on which staff and students cooperate to encourage people to take an interest in cultural matters not directly within their courses of study. To achieve this, visits are arranged from cultural organizations from New Brunswick and elsewhere. In the coming session, their net will spread from Cleveland, Ohio to Leeds, England. A varied program has been planned and the activities range from lectures on architecture, illustrated by slides, to a visit by a large choir, The York Singers. Another choir L'Orphéon des Trois Rivières is bringing a program ranging from homoursque through Canadian folk songs to classical music. Though the range of these entertainments may be varied, the standards of all will be high.

The Committee hopes to encourage amateurs to practice the arts. The Art Centre on the campus behind Aitken House, has facilities for painting and for playing records and for various other cultural activities.

The program for this term is:
October 2, 1960: L'Orphéon des Trois Rivières, a choir from Quebec. They have appeared on TV and sung on the radio, and have sung in New York and with the famous Russian Don Cossac Choir. Their concert here will be in Memorial Hall, beginning at 8.30 pm, Sunday night.
October 21, 1960: A lecture by

Mr. Stephen Vickers, associate Professor of Art and Archeology of the University of Toronto, on Public Architecture as a symbol. This will be illustrated by slides, beginning at 8.15 pm in the Art Centre.

November 1, 1960: The York Singers, a local ladies choir with some 90 members will give a concert of light classical music in Memorial Hall at 8.15 pm. This choir has recently defeated another group which won the Welsh Eisteddfod. It has an extremely popular reputation with audiences as well as at festivals.
November 10, 1960: Mr. William

Milliken, former director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, will lecture on the Building of a New Museum, a topic which should interest all of us in Fredericton.

Admission to all these events is free and the Committee expresses hope all students will come and will find these events interesting. Come even though you know nothing about music or painting or the other activities offered, after all, this is the place to make discoveries. Any suggestions about what is wished on future programs should be given to Miss Nan Gregg at the Library Reference Desk.

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