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The Canada School Journal

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CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS RECEIVED

An Honorable Mention at Paris Exhibition, 1878.

Recommended by the Minister of Education for Ontario.

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Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, New Brunswick.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Nova Scotia.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, British Columbia.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Manitoba.

Recommended by the Chief Superintendent of Education, P. E. Island.

The Publishers frequently receive letters from their friends complaining of the non-receipt of the JOURNAL. In explanation they would state, as subscriptions are necessarily payable in advance, the mailing clerks have instructions to discontinue the paper when a subscription expires. The clerks are, of course, unable to make any distinction in a list containing names from all parts of the United States and Canada.

THE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

In the course of a discussion in the House on March 10th., DR. McLAUGHLIN stated that a change in the present system was needed. He pointed out that the fund now costs the province \$40,000 a year, \$438,736 having been paid out, and \$167,390 paid in, making a charge of \$272,335 on the province during twelve years. He thought that this burden on the finances of the province should not be increased, and that the door should be shut against any more teachers paying into the fund. He would not advocate any system which compelled teachers to pay a certain amount of money into the fund, and prevented them from enjoying it. Nowhere on this continent, outside of Canada could such a system be found in vogue.

HON. G. W. ROSS, (Minister of Education) said he had given the subject some attention, and hoped during the recess to obtain the views of teachers on it. When the fund was instituted, teachers were made civil servants, on the ground that the teacher's salary was very low, that he was a public benefactor, that he was spending his time more in the interests of this province than in his own interest, and by making this allowance it was thought an appropriation would be made which would serve him when he was no longer able to act as a teacher. Mr. Ross thought it was a mistake to consider the teacher a civil servant. Although the salary was not high, the profession was one in which they should endeavor to cultivate a higher feeling of independence than was usually attributed to civil servants. Two views of the matter presented themselves. One was that *the fund should be self-sustaining*, in which case the \$4.00 a year now contributed would have to be immediately increased to \$16.00, and eventually to \$20.00.

On the other view, namely *the abolition of the fund*, they must not overlook those who are now sharing in it, and the refund to those who had not yet become claimants upon it. The amount due to those not yet pensioners was about \$100,000. Mr. Ross was not prepared to say what he would do, or what he thought best. He hoped to receive information during the recess which would enable him next year to bring down a scheme to make it self-sustaining or else provide for its abolition.

MR. MEREDITH thought there was no necessity of grafting on the provincial system any scheme of superannuation, and it was far better to pay those in the employ of the Province as they should be paid, so that they might be enabled to save something against a rainy day, rather than that they should be dependent on the Province for a gratuity.

HON. O. MOWAT thought that if the teachers had not received this allowance some of them would be actually starving. Nobody could dispute the fact that teachers' salaries were so low that nothing could be saved from them, and it would be a lamentable thing if those who had spent their lives in performing their duty, the most important, perhaps, in the State, should be deprived of its assistance. He trusted that the Minister would be able to arrive at some scheme which would meet the object of the fund without increasing the burden on the province. MR. HARCOÛRT said that if the Minister of Education were to address a circular to the teachers, fully ninety per cent. of them would favor the abolition of the fund.

In this Mr. Harcourt was undoubtedly correct, but it does not necessarily follow that a majority of the teachers know what is best to be done. The young and inexperienced do not yet fully appreciate the injustice of miserable salaries. Those who have entered the profession as a mere step-ladder by which they hope to reach something better, will naturally try to escape any burden for the general good of their temporary profession. Their permanent interest lies elsewhere. But these two classes form a majority of our teachers. We shall not pretend to dogmatise on a question admitting of so much diversity of opinion. At any rate teachers must prepare themselves to give their decision. If any means can be devised for adding about fifty per cent. to present salaries, the superannuation fund will no longer be a matter of importance. In the words of Mr. Mundella, the English Minister of Education, "teachers would know how to deduct their own per cent., and they would know how to make their own investments." Meantime, the fund is important and the question of its abolition deserves very serious attention.

One of the leading denominations has lately been successful in establishing an augmentation fund for the purpose of bringing up all salaries of its ministers to a certain fixed minimum. If something of the sort could be done for teachers the superannuation fund might be abolished forthwith. Indirectly,