

156. In commenting on the increased cost of education in England, the May Committee stated:—

"Educational progress has been a popular plank in election platforms since the war and we fear that a tendency has developed to regard expenditure on education as good in itself without much consideration of the results that are being obtained for it and of the limits to which it can be carried without danger to other, no less vital, national interests."

157. In addition to the popular appeal, which education provides for the political platform, the Teachers' Federation working in conjunction with the Parent-Teachers' Association have worked constantly for improvement in both instruction and equipment provided by the public for the education of the young. Modern schools with more modern devices in the shape of technical apparatus and text-books have been strenuously advocated and competition amongst the different school boards for the most skilled and highly trained teachers is continually in evidence.

158. The teachers themselves, while they quite naturally and properly have had in mind the many benefits to be derived from the best that modern education can give have not been altogether oblivious of the addition to their own prestige and remuneration which the modern attitude towards education has encouraged.

159. The parents in constant touch with the teachers, anxious for the future of their children, have provided the sympathetic background which the advocates of economy have found it difficult, if not impossible, to resist.

160. We further question in the interests of many of the pupils themselves, the wisdom of their taking up the study of the more advanced branches of learning when their time might be spent with more ultimate advantage to themselves in acquiring some proficiency in agriculture or some other industrial occupation, in which their lives are to be spent. Once the elementary stage of education has been passed the sooner the majority of the students commence to assist in producing the wealth now lying dormant in our natural resources, the better will it be for themselves and the society in which they live. A conception of education which is confined to scholastic attainments is far too prevalent. The skill of the agriculturist to produce, the craftsman to create and the salesman to distribute, are as worthy of esteem as is any other branch of human endeavour. The capacity of society, as it is at present constituted, to absorb aspirants, whether qualified or not to the scholastic, professional, executive, and similar occupations is limited, and our educational authorities should not ignore this very practical aspect of their problem.

#### LIMIT OF AGE FOR FREE EDUCATION.

161. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT FREE EDUCATION BE PROVIDED UP TO THE COMPLETION OF THE PUPIL'S FOURTEENTH YEAR, THAT IS, UP TO THE FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH. Should a pupil wish to attend High School after the completion of his fourteenth year, he should only be permitted to do so on paying fees sufficient to cover 50 per cent. of the entire cost of his education including interest and sinking fund charges on capital raised for the school building. If he desires to continue attendance at High School after the completion of his sixteenth year, he should only be permitted to do so on paying fees sufficient to cover 100 per cent. of such entire cost.

#### NIGHT SCHOOLS.

162. The foregoing recommendation is not intended to interfere with Night Schools, which we consider a valuable provision for those who are sufficiently enterprising to take advantage of them.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS.

163. If the above recommendation is adopted, we are of opinion that a reasonable sum should be provided annually by the Provincial Government and Municipalities for the purpose of establishing a well considered plan of scholarships so that all pupils of exceptional ability and promise may have an opportunity of enjoying the full benefits of our complete educational facilities.

#### OPENING NEW SCHOOLS.

164. The "Public Schools Act" provides that a public school may be established in a rural school district if there are not less than ten children between the ages of six and sixteen

years residing within its boundaries and available for attendance at public school. We recommend that this be amended so that there must be a minimum of fifteen children between the ages of six and fourteen years.

165. The Act also provides for the establishment of a High School if there are fifteen persons available as pupils at such school. We recommend that this number be increased to twenty.

#### CLOSING OF SCHOOLS.

166. The Act provides that a public school in a municipal school district shall be closed if the average attendance falls below 8, or below 6 in a rural school district. We recommend that both these numbers be changed to 10.

167. The Act also provides that a High School shall be closed where the average attendance falls below ten. We recommend that this figure be increased to fifteen.

#### CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.

168. The existing correspondence courses which provide the only source of education to-day for a large number of children in the Province will be available for those children for whom no school education will be available if these recommendations are adopted.

#### CONTROL OF SCHOOL EXPENDITURES.

169. In a municipal school district the Board of School Trustees makes an estimate of the ordinary expenses for the year and the amount thereof is by law payable by the municipality, which is authorized to recoup itself by levying a special rate for school purposes. In other words, the Municipal Council has no control over the amount of these expenses. We disapprove of this principle. We think the control of expenditures should be vested in the body charged with the duty of raising the taxes to pay them, namely, the Municipal Council. But merely to give this control to the Municipal Council would create a divided authority in regard to school matters. It seems to us, therefore, that the only feasible way of attaining the object we recommend is to abolish School Boards in municipal school districts and turn over their functions to the Municipal Council who will act through a standing committee which it will appoint for that purpose. This will ensure to the municipality control of all ordinary and extraordinary expenses. But to meet any objection that may be taken to the standing committee being limited to members of the Municipal Council, we make the further recommendation that a minority of this standing committee shall be elected by the electors. This will ensure to the electors the right of placing on this standing committee those specially qualified by experience and training in educational matters.

170. The principle of which we disapprove as regards municipal school districts obtains in rural school districts where the Board of School Trustees present their estimate of operating costs to the Government, which is required to pay over the amount of the estimate periodically, recouping itself by levying a school tax. We recommend that the expenditures of Boards in rural school districts should be made subject to the control of the Education Department.

#### TEACHERS' SALARIES.

171. In a pamphlet published by the B.C. Teachers' Federation entitled "What It Is; What It Has Done; What It Aims to Do," under the heading of "Salaries," the following remarks appear:—

"The average salary of all teachers in British Columbia has increased very considerably since the Federation was organized and the remuneration now offered is attracting many of the best students of our High Schools and Universities to the teaching profession. Several attempts have been made to reduce salaries but the teachers have generally been able to withstand such attempts owing to the activities of the Provincial and local organizations."

Of the truth of this contention there can be no question. We regret that the same consideration of their own interests has not been displayed by that unorganized and inarticulate body of sufferers known as taxpayers, in which case their punishment would not be as severe as it is to-day, a punishment which is likely to continue for many years.

172. In making the foregoing comments, it is not our intention to criticize in any way the legitimate ideals of all those associated with education to uphold and improve the standard