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MC 2035

St. John's Crying Need For A Vocational School

Nearly 4,000 Pupils Retarded From One to Six Years—More Than 1,200 Between Ages of Twelve and Seventeen Not in School at All—Rutherford Report an Eye-Opener.

The report of the vocational education survey of the city which was made by F. S. Rutherford has been compiled and yesterday copies were presented to the members of the St. John vocational committee. A summary of the report is given below.

The vocational survey was made in the city of St. John and the suburbs of Fairville, Randolph, East St. John, Poklok, etc., which form part of the industrial area. Its purpose was to secure information regarding the industrial and commercial classification of employes, the classification of pupils now in the schools, and to secure the opinions of employers and employes as to the need of vocational education.

The occupational distribution of the 8,802 employed persons were found to be as follows: Commercial and mercantile, 2,476; metal working, 1,280; textiles, 49; lumber and woodworking, 469; printing and binding, 11; building trades, 241; hotels and restaurants, 182; millers, bakers, candy and dairies, 175; electrical trades, 170; leather working, 68; laborers, 1,644, 'longshoremen, 800; fishermen, 200; miscellaneous, 907.

The occupational distribution of workers in the commercial and industrial group showed a large number employed in salesmanship, although only the larger wholesale and retail business houses were visited for the purposes of the survey. Of the 2,476 people employed in mercantile and commerciti callings, 604 were clerks, 551 salespeople; 288 managers and executives and 242 stenographers, 151 bookkeepers, 189 packers, 99 travelers, 79 warehousemen and 74 accountants, 68 milliners and 65 shippers, the remainedr being divided between ledgerkeepers, tellers, messengers, advertising agents, purchasing agents and miscellaneous.

The 1,717 women employed were distributed as follows:—Textile workers, 276; stenographers, 248; salespeople, 199; hotels, etc., 153; telephone operators, 143; clerical work (o;ce), 142, the remainder divided between confectionery and ice cream, woodworking and brushes, bookkeepers, milliners, tea and coffee packers, printing and book-binding, laundries, tailoring and sewing, bottlers and labellers, metal working and nursing.

It was noted that the limitations of the employment of women and girls as compared to those of men and boys applied not only to variety of employment, but also to the upper limits of advancement while employed. It was pointed out that while vocational training might be given for those more or less temporary wage-earning jobs, the most valuable service would be rendered in giving training in home-making to the women and girls.

It was expected that while the industries of St. John covered a variety of products, with the generation of hydro-electric power the number would rapidly increase. It might be possible to give instruction for fishermen in supplemental classes. In reckoning the number of persons employed as 'longshoremen, it was found the figure varied from 300 to 1,000, according to the season.

Learning No Trade.

There were found to be 544 adolescents employed and a very small percentage of these, especially those between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years, were training towards any trade. They were composed of 120 boys and 21 girls between fourteen and sixteen years, and 209 boys and 194 girls between sixteen and eighteen.

All common schools, high schools, orphanages, private schools and business colleges were asked to give an age, grade and sex and classification of pupils, and from this information concerning school pupils were obtained. The total number in business colleges were 139, of whom 38 were boys and 101 girls.

The acceleration, retardation and elimination of school pupils by age was tabulated. Of the 9,067 in the schools, sixty-one were found to be accelerated, 5,192 normal and the astoundingly large number of 3,814 to be retarded from one to six years. The cause of retardation was attributed to a curriculum not suited to the needs and ability of the pupils, too high standards of attainment or unsatisfactory teaching and it was believed the greater number of retardments were due to the first cause, an unsuitable curriculum.

The falling off of attendance in the higher grades was particularly marked. While there were 1,515 in grade one and 1,143 in grade five, the falling off was rapid after that grade. In grade six there were 866; grade seven, 749; grade eight, 551; grade nine, 319; grade ten, 158; grade eleven, 151 and grade twelve, 18.

By using accepted standards of population ratio, the number of pupils not attending school was arrived at and it was believed that a total of 2,059 between the ages of twelve and seventeen were not attending school as compared with the 3,711 who were attending. This number of those not attending fell into the different age groups as follows: Twelve years, fifty-nine; thirteen years, sixty-three; fourteen years, 145; fifteen years, 389; sixteen years, 605, and seventeen years, 818. Those attending school at the age of sixteen and seventeen were far fewer than those not attending school at those ages. While it was believed 2,059 were not attending school between the ages of twelve and seventeen it was found that the number of adolescents employed between the ages or fourteen and eighteen was only 544 and it was evident that all of those not attending school were not away from school because they were compelled to seek employment. An allowance of 300 was made for persons attending private schools and colleges outside the city, bringing the total of those not attending school and not employed to 1,215.

A Reasonable Method.

With the 1,215 not attending school between the ages of twelve and seventeen the retarded pupils in the schools at those ages number 1,880 making the total of those adolescents either receiving no schooling or retarded, 3,115. The pre-vocational course for those twelve to fourteen years of age and vocational courses for those fourteen years of age and over would appear to be the most reasonable method of correcting this retardation and elimination.

Having presented the facts of the case Mr. Rutherford in his report went on to draw conclusions and make recommendations which are summarized in the following paragraphs.

For conclusions it was found the great mass of the people were engaged in commercial, industrial, technical and home-making activities. St. John was felt to present a good field of opportunity for those trained along industrial and commercial lines and home-making was found the field in which the majority of women and girls ultimately found a place. There was a marked retardation and elimination of pupils in the common schools and high schools, a remarkably small number of pupils attended high schools, and a great waste of time to young employes and to their employers due to the absence of vocational counselling and a satisfactory apprenticeship system.

The need of vocational education in St. John was shown to be sufficient to justify the establishment of a day vocational school under the vocational education act and provision should be made for evening industrial, technical and home-making classes, the aim of the school being to encourage boys and girls to remain at school at least two years longer than the age required by law in order that they might receive some preparation for citizenship as well as a training toward their future vocation. The courses in the day vocational school should be provided as follows: 1. Pre-vocational course; 2, commercial course; 3, industrial course for boys; 4, home economics course for girls. In making any provision for day vocational pupils evening classes should be borne in mind as experience had shown that evening classes were stimulated and larger numbers enrolled when satisfactory accommodation was provided.

While it was not in the province of the report to recommend a site, it was felt the school should be located as near the centre of population as possible, within a block or two of the car line.

Study and Equipment.

The report entered into detail in regard to the courses of study and the equipment necessary.

The pre-vocational course was designed to catch the restless pupil and retain him in the school instead of losing him after the fifth grade. This course was to begin at the end of the sixth grade and continue until the end of the eighth grade and in weekly time allotment 300 minutes would be given to English, 210 to mathematics, ninety-five minutes to geography, 180 minutes to physical culture and varying periods to history, citizenship, civics and economics and science, while mechanical drawing would occupy 120 minutes and 360 minutes would be devoted to practical work in either woodworking, forging, printing, cooking or sewing.

The commercial course should be a three year one, which would take the pupils who had completed the eighth grade either in the academic or the pre-vocational course. The three years spent in this work would allow time for a specialized training for business life, as well as a good general education. The time should be evenly divided between academic and commercial subjects and the commercial subjects should include English, arithmetic, history, geography, economics, bookkeeping, business laws and papers, stenography and typewriting, physical training and as a possibility French or art and design.

The industrial course for boys was designed to meet the needs of the boy going into industry and enable him to choose wisely the type of work which he wished to follow. The students should have a good understanding of the fundamental principles of mechanical operations and a "shop sense." The course should cover three years and the time be evenly divided between shop work and book work. The instruction should be along the following lines: Mathematics, blue print reading, mechanical drawing, machine shop practice and tool making, electrical work, industrial studies of raw materials, woodworking, automobile mechanics and welding, applied mechanics, physics and chemistry, pattern-making, and the principles of moulding, stationary steam engineering, sheet metal working, printing and also include physical training, hygiene, English literature and composition, history, civics and elementary economics, arithmetic, geography and elementary physics.

Home Economics for Girls.

The home economics class for girls should contain the following subjects: English, arithmetic, science, history and geography, art and design, hygiene and sanitation, cookery, home management, sewing, home nursing and the study of materials. The course should cover three years and be open to girls who had completed the eighth grade or the pre-vocational course.

The survey had shown a wide field of opportunity for evening classes in St. John and the report recommended the vocational committee to endeavor to provide the accommodation and equipment for these classes and to develop and encourage them as much as possible. They should be opened in October of this year, the report said, and the following subjects should be offered: Home-making, subjects, cooking, dressmaking, millinery and home nursing; industrial and technical subjects, blue print reading, mechanical drawing, automobile operation and auto mechanics, shop mathematics, cabinet-making and carpentry; commercial subjects, shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, show card writing and salesmanship.

The report recommended that arrangements be made through the Trades and Labor Council, the Building Trades Association and industrial employers to enroll all apprentices for regular studies in evening classes. This arrangement had produced excellent results elsewhere.

The accommodation and equipment of the building were dealt with at some length in the last pages of the report.

STRONG PLEA FOR HEALTH CENTRE BY DR. FARRIS

A strong plea for support in establishing the proposed health centre for St. John was delivered at the Commercial Club luncheon yesterday by Dr. Hugh A. Farris, superintendent of the St. John county hospital at East St. John, when explaining matters in connection with the hospital. The dispensary, he said, was out of a home at present and its appropriation had been cut by $1,500 for the present year. Now, there was a plan on foot to develop a health centre in the V. O. N. home and thus consolidate health preservation and disease prevention systems. By the first of August some decision must be arrived at, and he urged the Commercial Club members and all citizens to unit behind this forward movement.

Major Ronald A. McAvity, president of the club, was in the chair, and on the conclusion of Dr. Farris' address, thanked him most heartily for his very practical remarks. He declared that Dr. Farris was doing a great work, quietly and assiduously, and deserved the support of all citizens interested in the welfare of their city.

Reflections

Deterioration of ability is inevitably reflected in the earnings, whether master or employee, or muscular or mental his occupation.

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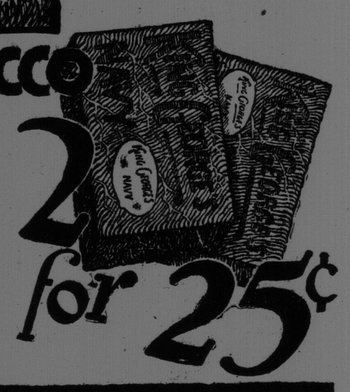

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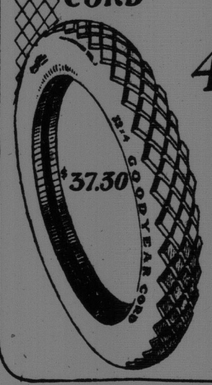

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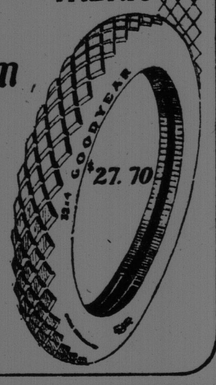

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