

must answer in writing. The teacher reads the answers, and pronounces them satisfactory or otherwise. If unsatisfactory the work must be done over again.

The slowest pupils may require every minute of the time to complete the work. The quickest pupils may finish a week's contract in three days. He may then elect to begin a new contract. Or he may give his schoolmates time to catch up, while he occupies the remaining two days with some extra subject of his special liking approved by the teacher. His ambition is stimulated by the joy of acquisition and development; his capability suffers from no enforced retardation.

* * * * *

The system is not new, though it is now dignified by a special name. From time immemorial the best teachers have made use of the principle. Now there is an effort to systematize it. Encouraging results have been attained through its use under the direction of wise and progressive teachers, and doubtless the method has come to stay. But the wise teacher will introduce it with caution, recognizing that it is not equally suitable in all departments of school work, and that in a subject like English literature the personal magnetism of the inspired teacher, and the interest and social spirit of the class as a whole, are elements of successful achievement that can never be dispensed with.

Before the coming of the Great War the countries of the New World had little realization of the crushing taxation of European States, with their military and naval establishments maintained at enormous cost. Even yet our burden is light compared with those borne by nations of the Old World; nevertheless there has been a sharp rise in the amount of per cent. of the national income. It was less than one-eighth 1914. Scrutinizing the tax bill to effect reductions, some economists have concluded that our public education is costing altogether too much, and that if expenditure at the current rate is persisted in, nothing short of national ruin can result.

Fortunately exact figures are available for the United States, and though Canadian conditions and American conditions are not identical, yet they are sufficiently similar to enable us to draw fairly accurate conclusions with reference to the provinces north of the 49th parallel.

LITERARY

CANADIAN BOOK WEEK, the purpose of which is to induce the reading public to take more interest in the works of our native writers is again upon us. The Women's Canadian Club, following out very properly the objects for which it was founded, is arranging to hold a special meeting in the furtherance of this cause. It will be addressed by Mrs. Carroll Aikins, of Naramata, and Douglas L. Durkin, the former actively associated with dramatic writing and production, and the latter a novelist of growing repute, whose stories in the main deal with Canadian themes.

* * * * *

The fame which has been won far and wide by the work of Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Aikins at their Home Theatre in the Okanagan, will lend a special interest to her address on the Canadian Drama. To those who are not posted, it comes as somewhat of a surprise to find how much work of distinction and originality is being produced along dramatic lines by Canadians, much of it of purely Canadian atmosphere and setting.

* * * * *

Mr. Durkin's new book, "The Magpie," is to be published very shortly, and is said to follow a different line from anything he has yet written. It is a serious study of the new Canada born out of the influence of the war and its sacrifice.

His appeal at a recent public meeting for a more sympathetic attitude by Canadian readers towards the product of the pens of their own writers, laid stress on the desirability at this critical period in our national history that we should find adequate self-expression through our literature.

In 1920 school expenditure in the United States reached the staggering sum of one billion, thirty-six million dollars. Can even the great and wealthy American nation bear up under this? When we figure it out it was less than ten dollars per head of the population. It was less than one and a half per cent of the national income. It was less than one-eighth of the expenditure for all other government activities. It was only a trifle more than the sum spent for candy. It was less than half the sum spent for tobacco. It was about four times the amount spent for ice-cream. It was about a third as much as was spent on joy-riding, races, pleasure resorts, etc.

Scientific tests in 1900 proved that Massachusetts, New York State, the District of Columbia, California and Connecticut were the five states that ranked highest in public school efficiency. Arkansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina, proved to be the five states ranking lowest in public school efficiency.

In 1918, in the army intelligence tests, the white troops of the former group of states averaged a score of 73, while the white troops of the latter group averaged but 44. Does public school efficiency pay? Is it worth while? Does it give adequate returns in after years?

The volume entitled "WHO'S WHO" gives the names of the nation's leaders, those who have attained prominence in the various fields of national endeavor. In the former five states, .11 per cent of the population are found to be enrolled in the nation's elite. In the latter five states .03 per cent. of the population are similarly enrolled.

But how does the comparison work out on a dollars and cents basis? In the former group the average earning per worker in 1920 was \$994.20. In the latter group the average earning was \$516.46. In the former five the workers averaged \$378.39 deposited in savings banks. In the latter five the workers' average accumulated cash saving was \$46.44.

And what of the pleasure and profit of living? Would any intelligent man of wealth, millionaire or lesser capitalist, choose to live in a community of illiterates, comparatively speaking, rather than in a community of highly intelligent and cultured men and women? Surely common honesty would give but one answer to such a question.

WILSON MACDONALD, whose portrait appears on the cover of this issue, is, from all we gather, one of those "men of letters" and poets of life, whom this western magazine welcomes an opportunity to honour. Because of his forthcoming visit to Vancouver, and the Recital to be given by him, we gladly give space to the following quotations concerning him—which have been contributed by E. M. V.

* * * * *

"And I sang them God's truths in my numbers—the truths which their hearts had opposed,

And some of them laughed when I started; and all of them sneered when I closed.

The West has no place for a poet," said the corpulent man with a sneer,

As we sat by the fire at Harrison Lake in the spring of the year."

"You would hardly think that the man who writes with a freedom and punch like this would have it in him to draw, from the critics, comparisons with Keats' "Nightingale," and Shelley's "Skylark" by his poem, "The Whip-poor-will." "I sang them God's truths in my numbers." Here is the preacher of indestructible things; and not a rushing rhymster of the Visible and Loud. In "The Whip-poor-will"—"Sad minstrel of the Night's neglected hour"—there is something more than a piece of poesy. There is a recognition that the sad minstrel is a singer whose notes Canadians can hear in their own woodlots; and a magnification of the God's truth that Nature, even when she seems most dolorous, is indeed also most sonorous. The nightingale and skylark—they interpret themselves to