

Alberta. But as the Bulletin so aptly remarks, "The statistics are presented for a younger age than that at which the children in the more newly settled portions of the country can attend school; besides the aboriginal population is included in the calculations. A better test of the relation between educational facilities and illiteracy is provided by the tables of literacy of Canadian born males over 21: (the figures for the females not given). For any unsatisfactory showing here our own school system is alone responsible as there has been practically no immigration from the other provinces into Quebec. There were in all Canada 137,060 illiterate Canadian born males over 21, and Quebec had over half of all these or 69,750; Ontario with a considerably larger population than Quebec had 26,516. Of Quebec's total number of Canadian born males over 21 there were 15.64 p.c. illiterate. It is possible to work out the figures for the illiterate voters. In all Canada there were 207,322 such and Quebec's share of these was 75,843, of whom 69,750 were a native product. Ontario had 43,504 such voters, of whom 26,516 were the native product. Quebec's proportion of the illiterate voters of the Dominion was 36½ p.c. Surely something of this difference is due to the fact that for over two generations Ontario has had an attendance law which has kept the boys in school so long that they never in after life lapsed into the class of illiterate voters.

It is interesting to compare the percentage of illiteracy of some of the European countries. These figures were obtained from the Report of the U. S. Commission of Education and the Statesman's Year Book of London. The figures are for 1910 or 1911. Denmark had 0.54 p.c., Norway and Sweden each had 0.11 p.c., Switzerland had 0.30 p.c., Holland 4.0 p.c. and France 4.9 p.c. These countries have had compulsory attendance laws for many years. Russia had no such law; 61 p.c. of her population were illiterate. At the outbreak of the war there was only one country of all Europe that had not adopted such a law, namely Russia. Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Spain and Belgium had all within a few years adopted such a law.

A school attendance law would necessitate provision for several thousands of children of foreigners who have now no school rights.

In February 1915 a sub-committee reported to the Protestant Committee on the educational facilities of the foreign element in Montreal; Mr. Howard Murray was convener of this sub-committee. It found that there were about 1000 children of Russians, Poles and Hungarians, 600 of Bulgarians, Roumanians and Ruthenians, 1000 of Greeks and Syrians and 1000 of other nationalities, or a total of 3600 of these children of school age. For

all of these no legal provision was made in the school law, which was drafted before these peoples came to our country. Most of those mentioned above are members of either the Greek or Russian Orthodox Churches, and according to the wording of our school law are classed neither as Roman Catholics nor as Protestants: they are not considered at all. No child of parents who are members of these churches, has any legal rights in the schools, and therefore if admitted at all is subject to the payment of a very heavy school fee. It seems the usual practice with both School Boards to demand a certificate either from the priest or pastor to certify that the particular children are communicants or attendants at a Church or Sunday School, before such children can be admitted without fees. Practically none of them are in the public schools. A few Churches are trying to carry on classes, particularly night classes, for young people of these nationalities; that is all that is being done. Their own Churches in 1915 were doing no educational work. As regards the Italians, of whom there were about 17,000 in Montreal at that time, and about 1000 children, some would be found in the Roman Catholic Schools, being the children of communicants. But this would not account for all such children. Mr. Murray's Committee thought that the total number of foreign children in Montreal without regular school facilities would be about 5,000. Here we see other defects of our school law laid bare; it was not planned to meet such a situation as this. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant School Boards have been unable to undertake the permanent and free education of these children. Within the last few years both Boards have been hard pressed to get accommodation for their own children in view of the rapid increase of population and the growth of districts by annexations. But that is no reason for burking the whole question till a more convenient season. In the meantime a large population of foreign children has been growing to manhood and womanhood in sheer illiteracy and ignorance of our ideals and Canadian Civilization, and, in some cases, without a speaking knowledge of either of our official languages. Surely such an alarming situation cannot be paralleled in any self-governing Dominion of this wide Empire. For the protection of us all it must not be allowed to go on, particularly as after the war it will get steadily and hopelessly worse. A remedy must be found at once by which they will not only be given school rights but will be required to attend.

Your Committee was not the first to find out that the matter of school attendance in this province presented serious problems. About ten years ago the Roman Catholic School Board of Montreal saw the serious-