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 J. S. Macdonald, Managing Editor.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
 Statistics of the school attendance in North Sydney disclose a condition of affairs that should have the serious consideration of the school authorities and citizens generally, particularly of parents of children reaching the "teen age." We refer to both the matter of irregular attendance at school, and the number of children who attend the different elementary and higher grades and the high school.

Taking the former matter, irregular attendance, the figures show the following registration, daily average attendance and percentage of attendance for years from 1911 to 1921, omitting 1918, for which the figures are not available at this writing:

Year	Reg.	Dly. av. att.	Pct. att.
1911	1158	761	65
1912	1174	903	77
1913	1269	862	69
1914	1295	894	69
1915	1353	977	72
1916	1480	1120	75
1917	1343	1058	78
1919	1540	1012	67
1920	1526	1167	76
1921	1608	1234	76

It will be noticed that the increase in the enrollment has been constant and in the eleven year period has amounted to almost 40 per cent. The daily average attendance, however, shows a marked variation in the percentage from year to year. There was a remarkable increase in 1912 as compared with 1911, but the percentage again dropped down in 1913, remaining the same in 1914, with a 2 1/2 per cent increase in 1915. Then there was another noticeable increase for 1916 and 1917, but for 1919 the percentage had again dropped off to almost the same as 1911, 1920 and 1921 showed a recovery, but the percentage still did not reach the high figures of 1916 and 1917.

To some extent this variation in the attendance can be explained by particular conditions in any given year. During the years when the "flu" prevailed so severely, for instance, one would expect the school attendance to be adversely affected. In some years also, when there is not an epidemic of disease, there is more sickness than in others. It must be remembered, also, that even if children themselves are not generally affected, sickness of adults often keeps the older children at home. Giving every consideration, however, to this explanation of epidemic disease and prevalence of sickness, as well as any other explanation, the average of school attendance here is not as high as it should be. This is due, we think, not so much to what might be called permanent absence, that is, children who start in school at the beginning of the term and only attend for a short time but to irregular attendance, missing one or two days out of almost every week. This irregularity shows up in the daily average attendance.

Where the truancy law is well enforced and parents realize their responsibility in regard to attendance of their children at school the percentage of daily average attendance will be found to range from 85 to 90. That it is so far below these

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figures here shows that the matter is serious and should engage attention. The truancy act should be well enforced, teachers should impress upon the children the necessity for regular attendance, and parents should realize that irregular attendance hampers the work of the teachers, retards the child's progress, and means that the town is paying out good money for which an inadequate return is received thru no fault of the teachers.

The statistics of attendance in the different grades throw light on an even more important matter, and that is, the number of young people who take the high school course here. Taking the same years, 1911 to 1921 inclusive, the figures of registration for groups of grades, omitting the years 1914, 1915 and 1918, for which the figures are not at present available, are as follows:

Year	Gr. 9-10-11	Gr. 7-8	Gr. 6
1911	100	130	91
1912	78	113	89
1913	100	92	—
1916	109	136	98
1917	99	132	93
1919	116	160	112
1920	119	179	113
1921	114	222	102

Examining these figures one is at once struck with the poor enrollment in the higher grades 9, 10 and 11 and the very slight increase shown in the eleven year period. The year 1921 in fact, shows a decrease from the figures for 1919 and 1920, in which years successive increases occurred, as should be the case every year. The figures for the whole period show that high school attendance here is almost stationary. 1912 showed a striking drop from the figures for 1911, but the figures for 1921 as compared with those for 1916 bring out the situation in high light. That there has been an increase of only two in the registration in the higher grades in five years is a very serious matter and shows that there is something wrong. What that is, it is the duty of the school board to find out, and it is also their duty to apply the remedy as far as possible. The figures for the intermediate grades, 7 and 8, show a constant and satisfactory increase from 1913 on, but the figures for the higher grades do not bear the relation to those of the intermediate grades that they should. What is the reason, and what does this indicate?

It indicates that not nearly enough of the children of North Sydney are going on to the higher grades and getting at least a year of high school work. This means that they are not getting half an education, for it is only when a child reaches the 7th or 8th grade that it really begins to learn things that will be of use to it in later years. A generation is growing up here that is not nearly as well equipped with education as they should be, and not nearly as well as children in neighboring places where better results are being secured in the schools, particularly in regard to the high schools. Any person who has occasion to hire young people here for clerical work, or who takes the trouble to test their knowledge, knows that this is so. It is the exception to find one that can write a grammatical, properly spelled and properly punctuated letter in a fair hand. Bright girls take positions as stenographers and give unsatisfactory work, not because they do not do the best they can, but because they are not sufficiently educated. Too many children leave school here after taking the 8th or 9th grade. A child that has not taken at least one year of high school work has only a smattering, one might say, of history and geography, knows practically nothing of literature, and is taken from school just at the time when its mind has reached a stage of development that enables it to grasp more effectively the benefit of what it has studied in the lower grades.

What is the reason for this condition of affairs? There are several reasons that occur to us, but as this article is already long enough the matter will be dealt with further in a later article, when perhaps something in the way of a remedy will also be suggested.

SYDNEY MINES NEWS.

(From Friday's Daily Edition)
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 Thomas Macnamara arrived home this morning from New Glasgow, where he has been for the last few days on business for the C.M.B.A. band.

That the oft-repeated statement to the effect that nearly every other house in all small communities, and large ones, too, an outfit for making home-brew or moonshine, is true, is beginning to dawn on the doubting Thomases. Another illustration of the fact that Sydney Mines can scarcely be counted as an exception to the rule, was demonstrated when deputy Lamond, inland revenue officer Kennedy and a provincial constable seized another still today on the premises of a Pond road citizen.

The condition of Mayor McCormack continues to improve and he is now convalescing at his home. His Worship paid a visit to the town hall last Tuesday for the first time since February 25th. In speaking with the Mayor yesterday he expressed himself as beginning to feel like his old self again, and expected to be able to take up his duties by the first of next month. His Worship suffered a relapse some three weeks ago which developed into pneumonia. For more than a week his condition was very critical indeed, and at one stage of his illness, hopes for his recovery were at a very low ebb. His many friends will be glad to see him on his feet again and will wish him a speedy recovery.

Construction work is well under way renovating the business premises of Mr. William G. Conacher, converting the well known St. James billiard hall into what is destined to be the finest up-to-date hotel the town has ever had. This hostelry when completed will have thirty rooms on the second floor, fitted throughout with all modern appliances. On the ground floor in the front portion will be a commodious smoke-room and clerk's office. Also situated on the ground floor will be the large dining hall and kitchen. The work is being done under the supervision of Mr. John McMillan, contractor, of Sydney Mines and North Sydney, who expects to have the work completed and the hotel ready for business by early summer. Mr. Conacher is to be commended for the interest he is showing in the welfare of the town in launching out on such an elaborate undertaking, and those acquainted with the clean and sanitary methods with which Mr. Conacher has always conducted all of his previous business enterprises will not hesitate to recommend this new hostelry as being of the highest character.

(From Saturday's Daily Edition)
 The condition of James H. Hurd, who was injured in No. 1 colliery this week, and who is now in the Harbor View hospital, is not so badly injured as was at first thought. Enquiries from the hospital this morning elicited the information that he is improving rapidly.

Good luck did not continue in the footsteps of the liquor agents yesterday in their campaign of "still hunting." After capturing a mechanical device specially adapted for the manufacture of moonshine from a poor duff on Pond street, the raiding party followed up the scent, and the next centre of attraction was a house on Cottage street, which they searched from storm-

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door to saddleboard but failed to locate anything of a "weassy" character or bootleg brand.

That the Scotia miners are not taking very kindly to the "no contract" system is evident from the fact that the men in certain sections of the mine are said to be looking for separate contracts. It seems to be a fifty-fifty split among the men as a whole as to their approval or disapproval of this so-called sabotage system, which seems to be, to many of them, the most direct route to perdition. Board member Angus McPhee states that the executive cannot do any more, and that the whole matter was in the hands of the men themselves.

(From Monday's Daily Edition)
 Mr. Aya Astephen left on last night's express for Montreal on an extended visit to his relatives in that city.

The death of Collie McNeil formerly the efficient and obliging manager of the Woolworth stores here, who had been ailing for the past four years took place at his residence on Brookside street, Glace Bay, yesterday afternoon. He was forty-two years old. The deceased is survived by three brothers, James on the Canadian West, Stephen, the Michigan and Rod of Iowa; also three sisters, Mrs. John W. Francis, of this town, Mrs. McVernon, Boston and Sarah at home. Mr. McNeil was well known and highly respected citizen, and at one time conducted an up-to-date bookstore in Glace Bay. His death will be very generally regretted.

The most exciting game of basketball ever witnessed in Sydney Mines took place Saturday evening in the Temperance hall between the Seniors and the champions of Cape

Breton, better known in this battle as the "young fellow." Both sides went at it hammer and tongs during the entire period of the game and excitement was at a high tension throughout. In the first half each side suffered a casualty, Bobby McDonald of the Seniors having one of his fingers dislocated while Farnsworth of the opposing team suffered a hefty poke in the eye, these two being replaced by Ross Fraser and Fred McKay respectively. From the start the Seniors pressed home their advantage and gained such a lead that although the second half saw the young champs rallying to the old battle cry and gaining strong points, they were unable to overcome the lead already gained by their opponents, and the game ended 43 to 28 in favor of the Seniors. The game was played over two 20 minute periods. Harold Layton, referee, West Campbell scorer, Clarence McDonald timekeeper.

(From Tuesday's Daily Edition)
 Everett Burchell, Archie Coldwell, and Edward Snow arrived home on this morning's express from Kingston, Ontario, where they have been taking a special course in military training. Langille Morrison and Clement Acock two other members of the party stayed off at New Glasgow visiting friends and relatives.

The death took place March 24th at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary of Mrs. Andrew Gillespie, aged 59 years. The deceased was a resident of Sydney Mines for many years. She leaves to mourn their loss a husband and five children at Blantyre, Scotland, also one son James at Edmonton, Alberta. Mrs. Christopher Robinson and Mrs. Alexander Napier, Sydney Mines are daughters.

(For other Sydney Mines News see page 8.)



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