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SCHOOL MEETINGS.

The annual school meeting has been held and many teachers breathe again. The meetings this year did not differ presumably from those of other years, save perhaps in the particular of quietness, but there is danger of them becoming too quiet, degenerating into indifference. There are usually a very few persons in a district who do all the school business, the other ratepayers either remaining passive and contented, or giving vent to their discontent in grumbling. It is a common remark that "those who never attend the school meetings find the most fault." The ratepayers should take care that the best men in the district should be trustees, and these men should have enough public spirit to carefully give their time and services. The duties of trustees are well defined, yet how often are they assumed by the school meeting.

It is not uncommon for the meeting to take it upon itself to vote whether the school shall be kept open six months or one year. This motion should never be put as it is clearly out of order—its decision resting entirely with the trustees. It is the privilege of the ratepayers to vote whatever sum of money they wish, and if the trustees do not deem the amount sufficient for the needs of the school they provide a remedy. Again, in selecting a site for a school house, how often do the ratepayers arrogate to themselves the right of selection, ignoring the trustees and their functions. Some meetings have gone to the length of instructing their Board of Trustees as to what particular teacher they shall engage and what the salary shall be.

It is quite right for the trustees in all cases, when possible, to take the ratepayers into their confidence informally, but it is decidedly unbusiness-like to bring these matters up in the regular meetings of the district. Much misapprehension exists as to the number of ratepayers necessary to carry on the annual meetings or any others. There must be a chairman and secretary as well as a mover and seconder for every resolution. The secretary is not debarred from either moving or seconding a resolution. So as a matter of fact three persons can conduct a meeting, though a much fuller attendance is always desirable.

The auditors' report should always be approved by the meeting, and if it is not satisfactory it need not be accepted.

Trustees should be careful to note that every assessment should be levied during the year in which it is imposed, otherwise it is illegal and cannot be collected.

Any school meeting can not be held at the call of the trustees. They can call a meeting to provide for an occasional vacancy in the Board. If the district fails to hold the annual meeting at the

time specified by law, the notices of such meeting have to be given by the Inspector. If the meeting be a special one for the purpose of voting money, it may be held upon requisition of the majority of the ratepayers of the district, or the Chief Superintendent, or the Board of Education may grant the Inspector authority to call such meeting.

The secretary of the Board of School Trustees is by law the secretary of the school meeting. His accounts should be in the hands of the auditor at least one week before the annual meeting. Trustees can not resign at will. There is a regular way by which to do so, and the meeting should not take it upon itself to accept the resignation of any trustee.

The ratepayers should provide at the annual meeting for sweeping and cleaning the school building as it forms no part of the duty of either teacher or pupils to do this work.

These remarks upon the duties and powers of school meetings might be extended to a much greater length, and we may again return to the subject.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

The absence of compulsory clause in our system of Free School education is one of its greatest defects. It is not sufficient to make the compulsory clause permissive as has been done in this Province but binding as in Massachusetts and many other countries where free common school education is provided. The recent Act passed by our Legislature permitting Boards of Trustees the option of enforced attendance at the schools or not has not been taken advantage of in any instance in New Brunswick. This has not been owing to a belief on the part of the governing bodies that enforced attendance is not desirable, but, as in the case of the city of St. John, the Trustees hesitate to adopt the clause in the Act on account of the increased burdens which it would impose on the taxpayers. It is true that in cities and incorporated towns, where the schools are nominally full, more school machinery would have to be provided, but in the country districts it is far otherwise. There, with the present provisions, fully as many more children could be accommodated, and the children to fill them up are not wanting if they would attend school. In the city of St. John probably one third of the children of schoolable age do not attend school at all, and what is to be said of those who do attend? A glance at the returns will show that under the most favorable circumstances, the attendance is very irregular. The number of pupils in attendance at the schools of the Province during the year 1885 was 73,067. The average attendance was 33.85 per cent, or rather more than one-half of the pupils enrolled. This is not as it should be and taken altogether is very unsatisfactory, especially when it is considered that ample school accommodation is provided for all who do attend and many more who simply neglect to do so. This is very distasteful to taxpayers, and the demand for enforced attendance is becoming louder and louder and must soon receive more attention at the hands of our legislators. If the state has the right to provide free education it certainly has the right to see that the people partake of its advantages. A permissive compulsory clause is not sufficient.

EDUCATIONAL.

The following extracts, the first from a "Professional Man" in the *Truro Sun*, the other from the *St. John Daily Telegraph*, are worthy of careful perusal by those interested in our educational development:

"Why do so many of our young people devote themselves to the school teaching profession? Is the question which now arises from a common sense view of the public mind on this matter all over the Province (Nova Scotia). To all those who wish to advance themselves in knowledge we would say: 'by all means get educated,' but at the same time we would like to show them their great mistake in becoming school teachers when they might otherwise be more lucratively employed.

In this province especially, for the last two years, the young people have taken a great notion of school teaching, inasmuch that the profession is now getting overcrowded, and many teachers will be compelled to step off from the profession or try the pursuit of it in some other country.

According to last year's educational report, when the total number of schools in the province during the summer term was 2,005, and the total number of teachers (including assistants) was 2,127, also with about 300 teacher's licenses issued annually, although there is a considerable number leaving the profession every year, the increase is evidently far too rapid; and it is now evident that before long this tide of influx must ebb and people will set their minds on some other work.

It is a great mistake for a young man to think, when he sees so many follow in educational pursuit, that he should follow their example.

A great many people also think that school teaching is an easy and a lucrative billet, in this opinion they are sadly mistaken. We would advise our young people not to contemplate the idea of educating themselves for the profession in order to have an easy billet in life, for there is no class of harder working men in the world than students. And as far as teaching is concerned, besides being very hard work, it is objectionable from the fact that there is nothing in it.

In consequence of the exceedingly low salaries given to teachers in these Maritime Provinces, it is a fact that when young men find themselves school teachers, they are compelled to step on to some other profession in order to make a living.

If half of our young men who aim at school teaching or any other profession, would adopt farming, or some other branch of industry, they would show more intelligence in choosing their life occupation. Of all occupations and professions, under the sun, there is none better or more honorable than farming."

"Our public school system is one of which we boast. It has done and is doing a vast work in training our youth, eradicating ignorance and disseminating knowledge. But on the other hand it is as surely alienating the tastes of young men from the agricultural pursuits which it is desirable that most of them should follow. We have reached a state of things in which the young men of the rural districts will not stay on the farms their fathers tilled. Say what we may the education of the day breeds dislike for manual labor. The farms go wanting their needed culture while the farmers' sons crowd the ranks of clerkships, the overcrowded professions, or the equally thronged avenues of business callings, or seek for petty government offices, or leave the country. Where will the end be? The important industry of the country is agriculture, the one for which the State does least, the one which the State burdens to find the money for the ever increasing services which the State assumes. No one conversant with farm life now and a quarter of a century ago, but will see that as a result of changes brought about by the State (federal and provincial), farm property has been depreciated at least twenty per cent., and stripped of the workers to whom farming must look for continuance."

John Ericsson, the well-known inventor, who is now eighty-three years of age, is still hale and hearty, and works as steadily, and as many hours per day, as he did twenty years ago.