

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE MANITOBA TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

## Trustees' Bulletin

### WHAT IT COSTS TO EDUCATE

There is in Manitoba a school district which contains sixteen sections of land, all of which is occupied by settlers. The value is quoted at \$10,000 per quarter section or \$640,000 for the whole. This year the wheat crop is 3,000 acres, the oat crop 4,000 acres, and barley 1,000 acres. The yield is 22 bushels per acre for wheat, and corresponding good yield for the other grains. The value of this at prevailing prices is \$280,000. The roots and the sale of stock bring the total up to \$300,000. The cost of seeding, harvesting, caring for stock, salaries of employees, amounts to just one-half of the income. The rest is in the bank to the credit of the farmers. That is, the net profit to the district for the year is \$150,000. Out of this the district expends \$650 for salary of the teacher of the school and \$350 for interest on debentures, and for wood and repairs. In other words, the expenditure on the children is two-thirds of a dollar out of every hundred dollars of clear profit. The question is: Is that a fair percentage to spend upon the education of the children?

Regardless of the answer to this question it will be said at once by every reader that there is no such district in Manitoba, and this is quite true in a sense. The intention is that every reader shall fill in the figures for his own district and strike his own percentage. I should love above everything to have exact figures given from every district in the province. There is no reason why they should not be given. No one need hesitate to tell how much he is spending on his children and how much is being put in the bank. The question is this: What is a fair percentage to spend upon the children? Shall we say five per cent. or ten per cent. or twenty-five per cent., or one-half of one per cent.

In the city there is a workman who

supports a family of six on a salary of \$1,200 a year. His house and lot is valued at \$6,000, and his school tax is reckoned at \$60, and this is no myth. Is he overtaxed for educating six children? At the end of the year he is not able to put a dollar to his credit in the bank, but he has his children educated. Is it worth while?

Supposing we say that people are wise who put two per cent. of their annual profits in education. What would it mean in the case of the district quoted? What would it mean to have two per cent. of \$150,000 spent in the district school? Two per cent. of \$150,000 is \$3,000. This would get a teacher at \$1,500 or less than one-half of what any farmer is making. It would leave \$1,500 for fencing the grounds, paying a caretaker, furnishing the building, buying equipment for the school house and playground, and purchasing a magic lantern, a library, an outfit of tools and implements, erecting a workroom, getting a hot lunch outfit, and everything of this nature. Is it worth while? Is our country to advance in everything excepting in this one matter of employing good teachers and equipping good schools? Heaven save us from breeding a people who have money but no brains, and Heaven save us from men and women who will spend on everything but their children!

I wish trustees and parents generally would discuss this. As a parent, I am willing to give everything I can earn in order that my children are educated, but I can get little backing. My next-door neighbor had \$8,000 worth of wheat on his half-section, and he complains that his tax of \$45 for all purposes is excessive. And particularly he complains of the school tax which is about \$24 of this amount. Is he right or is he hopelessly insane? I wish trustees and parents would discuss this