

only 176 pupils were exempted from attendance by reason of needy circumstances, less than 2 p.c. of all eliminations. Is there reason to think the percentage of needy in Montreal would be much greater than in Toronto?

The evil effect of the lack of compulsory attendance in our Elementary Schools is strikingly apparent from the small enrolment in our provincial Technical Schools.

Quebec has Technical Schools that are second to none on this continent. But the enjoyment of these splendid privileges is not being adequately secured to the youth of our land. Nowhere else do we see how utterly inadequate is the policy of increased grants, admirable in their way, without a corresponding measure of compulsion that will keep boys in school until the completion of the public school course, when they are ready to enter such Technical Schools. As a matter of fact at the completion of the public school course there are hardly any boys left; they have dropped out to take some temporary job that requires no skill and leads nowhere. Within the last few years Quebec has built splendid gaols and splendid Technical Schools but it seems much easier to fill the gaols than the schools. At least in 1915 there were more inmates of gaols than of such schools. (Consult Quebec Statistical Year Book.) There were 6,139 persons sentenced to prison and penitentiary that year and only 1,328 enrolled in Technical Schools, and of these latter 923 were in Night Classes only. Even when we add the enrolment (2694) of Schools of Arts and Manufactures, the total enrolment is only about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the number of people in gaol that year. That is something to think about, particularly when Dr. Cody, Minister of Education for Ontario says he expects Ontario will keep all her children in Continuation or Technical Schools until they are 16 years of age, while England will eventually keep hers till 18. The enrolment of our Technical Schools for 1916-17 was 406 in day classes and 836 in night classes — a considerable drop in enrolment. That is not a very promising sign. And in the large Montreal Technical School, in the fourth year of the course, there were no pupils in the English section and only 2 in the French section. In the Quebec Technical School there were no pupils at all in the fourth year. When other countries and provinces make education compulsory in Continuation and Technical Schools, as they are planning to do, how will the future workmen of Quebec compete with them? We have not taken the first step of keeping boys in school until they have the qualifications that will enable them to enter such schools. For, to enter a Technical or Agricultural College it is necessary for a pupil to have acquired a certain academic

standing. The report of the Technical Education Commission by Dr. James Robertson insisted on a compulsory attendance law as the only proper basis on which to build a system of technical education. How much more true will this be, and how much greater will be the need, after the war? During the period of reconstruction technical knowledge will be at a premium if we are to compete successfully in trade with Germany. Where are the scientifically trained men to come from? Must men be imported to fill many of the best positions? College trained men cannot fill them all. And Quebec is to build a large merchant marine; who will plan and carry out the work that requires technical skill? Must we go to the United States and the other provinces, as we have so often done for railway experts with the proper knowledge and training? Again consider the matter of the cost of Technical Education: the figures are for the year 1916-17. The total cost of maintenance of three of the four Technical Schools was \$203,372.82. The cost of the Technical school at Sherbrooke, which had 11 pupils, was included in the report under the general cost of the Classical College. The average cost per pupil enrolled in the three schools was \$162.50. And in these four Technical Schools about a million and a half dollars of money is invested. Surely this investment could be made to yield a better return in the amount of training given.

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE JUVENILE COURT REPORTS

Of the children who came before the Juvenile Delinquents' Court in Montreal last year, 554 cases or 45 p.c. of the whole number, were neither employed nor attending school. And 13 p.c. of the children who came before the Court could neither read nor write. These were all children of school age as the Juvenile Court deals only with children up to 16 years of age. Our voluntary school system is fast building up a considerable contingent of juvenile criminals and loafers to fill our gaols in the future. Practically all these loafers learn their habits of loafing during school age.

#### LITERACY AND ILLITERACY

Bulletin XV of the Dominion Census of 1911 gives the educational status of the people and the usual literacy tables. When the literacy of the whole population 5 years of age and over is considered, Quebec does not show up too badly; her percent of illiteracy was 12.69, which is higher than that of Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and British Columbia but less than that of New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and