

### Shall Teachers be Pensioned?

Many of our best teachers would like to continue teaching until incapacitated by age, but they see a reasonable prospect of being able to save from their average salaries enough to support them in their declining years. Consequently all of them who can do so seek other professions. There are many of our best high school and college graduates who never enter the teaching profession because of the poor financial and social prospects. Thus both talents and valuable experience are lost to our profession because no provision is made to secure us from want when old age or sickness comes. Even those who remain in the profession are rendered less useful by their anxiety for the future. Instead of being energized and harassed by heat and misgivings, they should be enabled to give themselves up unreservedly to their lofty but difficult duties.

In the civil service those who collect duties or distribute letters receive pensions. After twenty-one years' service in the army our soldiers, who may never have fired a shot at an enemy, are pensioned. Then why should not our teachers, who fight the destructive forces of ignorance and who render their country the greatest of all services, be also pensioned? Their work is more perilous to health and life than the work of the soldier. They require more learning, skill and preparation, more moral courage and more brains, and they should be, as they are in Germany, cared for by the country whose greatness they create. The German system of education is confessedly the best in the world. Why? Largely because of the prominence given to the teacher on account of the recognized importance of his work. He is a dignified government official, with permanent employment, and a recognized social position, provided for by the state when he is unable to continue his work, and even his wife and family provided for after his death.

Teachers are pensioned in nearly every civilized country in the world. England has no adequate system of pensions yet, but we all know in what a chaotic state her educational system has always been. It is true that she has several endowed schools, the best in the world, but her national system, if system it can be called, is but a series of awkward compromises. But even England has made more progress in the pensioning of teachers than we have. In 1893 the House of Commons unanimously resolved that a national state-aided system of superannuation for teachers in public elementary schools should be established at an early date.

At present, in our provinces, teachers are so ill paid, and the possibility of making provision for old age so

uncertain, that our profession is filled with untrained novices who make it a stepping stone to some other employment. This state of things will continue until some provision is given to the teacher's position by providing pensions and making professional training compulsory for all teachers.

This is too important a matter to be left to the crude and ill-formed opinions of young teachers. Not many young men, and probably no young ladies, become teachers expecting to make teaching a life-long business. It would therefore be unwise to decide a question into which selfish considerations may so easily enter by the votes of those who are not in a position to look upon it without prejudice. If we now find so many teachers underbidding each other, how can we expect from them a wise decision on a question requiring the fullest knowledge of difficult economic science and the experience of other countries.

The pensioning of teachers is so important a subject that it should be considered and decided wholly by the Council of Public Instruction, aided by the wisest and most experienced educationists of the country.

In a future number we will give an account of the system of pensioning in the United States, Quebec, Ontario and some European countries.

### Teaching vs. Telling.

Every trained teacher will agree at once that telling is not teaching. It has been called by some one the didactic disease, and how many are afflicted with it! If you visit our schools and sit quietly for a time, you will be struck with the disproportion of talking done by teachers and pupils. Our normal school training is on the principle that a pupil is not to be told what he is capable of finding out for himself. First, a desire for knowledge is to be created or stimulated, second, the way to acquire knowledge, and third, the power to express knowledge. It is the teacher's duty and function to direct and supervise all the channels, and especially to take cognizance of how far the pupil is becoming exclusive owner of this property.

If pupils meet no difficulties, they acquire no power of overcoming them. If they are not required to think they will not develop increased power of thought. It is therefore the unwise teacher who helps his pupils too freely.

An amusing sketch is published in *School Education*, and it represents what is taking place daily in some of our schools.

The Author of *Shalott* decided to make a pilgrimage to the Cave of Sarnon School. First of all he dropped into the *Oratory of Chancel Abbey*, where a friar who