

Educational Men and Matters

THE FORTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Thomas Allardyce Brough.

The Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the public schools of British Columbia, covering the school year of 1918-19, contains not a little interesting information. By it we learn that the total enrolment of pupils was 72,006, of teachers 2,332. Of this number 197 were employed in high schools, 967 in city graded schools and 1178 in ungraded schools.

There were 45 high schools, with an attendance of 5,806, a very creditable showing for a young and sparsely settled province, but if no boy or girl had left school before completing a high school course the number would have been four or five times as great. There is a demand in many quarters for compulsory education up to the age of 16 instead of the age of 14, as at present. If such a regulation were now in force in British Columbia it would mean an increase in attendance of more than 13,000, requiring at least 325 additional class-rooms and teachers.

Of the teachers 376 held Academic certificates, many of this class being university graduates; 453 held first-class certificates, 873 second-class, 388 third-class, 140 temporary and 102 special. Men teachers numbered 486, women teachers 1846.

One of the most interesting departments of the report deals with school and home gardens. In all there were 137 schools with gardens, cared for by 260 teachers and 7,367 pupils. In addition to this 24 teachers and 468 pupils interested themselves in home gardens. This feature of school work exemplifies one of the most hopeful movements in present day education. The future of the nation is in the hands of the tillers of the soil and their descendants; hence any movement that tends to popularize the tilling of the soil is one of great national moment, and should be a matter of the greatest possible concern to every patriot. Spain's decadence can be traced largely to the disdain for agriculture felt by the Spanish grandees; much of the stability that has characterized British society has been directly due to the fact that the British aristocrat is not only interested in every phase of country life, but is himself very frequently a practical farmer and stock-breeder. Waving the flag may have some value in our attempts to Canadianize foreigners, but teaching the boys and girls of our own flesh and blood to till the soil is a very real and substantial form of patriotism, and gets to the very root of the matter in more senses than one.

In manual training and domestic science more than 15,000 pupils received instruction from 97 trained teachers. In King Edward High School, Vancouver, the nucleus of a technical high school has been doing efficient work, and when it shall be found possible to house the pupils in a building of their own we may look for indefinite increase in the number of pupils and indefinite expansion in the number of courses offered.

Of the thirteen inspectorial reports nine deal more or less fully with the question of teachers' salaries. Emphasis is placed on the fact that if our schools are to be one hundred per cent efficient in teaching the children, then adequate salaries must be provided. In this connection I may be permitted to quote a single paragraph from the remarks of Inspector H. H. MacKenzie:

"The passing of the male teacher still continues to be the tragedy of the schools. And yet what is there under present conditions of living to induce any young, red-blooded man to stay by the rural schools? Solutions and suggestions have

been offered up and down the land by educationalists, but apparently these are but as a voice crying in the wilderness. Now in our larger centres of population we are compelled to witness many of our most capable women leaving the profession to which they brought not only charm and grace of manner, but that character which inspired the youth of the land to attain to noble and lofty ideals. These women are entering other professional and commercial fields where value is given for value received, where remuneration is commensurate with labor and energy expended and bears a reasonable ratio to the cost of living. The young man who would take up the teaching profession in the province need have no fear of falling by the sin through which fell the angels. He can fling away ambition. He has no use for it. For without a parallel, I believe, in any other walk of life he will find that if ultimately he should receive appointment to what would naturally be considered the higher positions in educational work, he must be prepared to accept a decrease and not an increase in remuneration."

A significant commentary on the foregoing is furnished by the circumstance that at the present moment Ontario, the premier province of the Dominion, is facing a shortage of two thousand men and women if its public schools are to be staffed by trained teachers. At the present time also in British Columbia one teacher out of five holds a certificate lower than Second Class. Are we to be content with this, or with an even worse state of affairs in the near future? Are we giving our children, our potential men and women, our future citizens, a fair chance? Or are we selling their birthright for a mess of pottage?

Purdy's Are Sweet Reflections

As a personal gift Candy seems to be recognized as having a field all its own.

It IS a gift—something one can take along and the sharing of it breaks down barriers of reserve—opens pleasant channels of talk.

The best candy is Purdy's. Mr. Purdy's name on a box of chocolates is an indication that the giver has selected with discrimination—and has some appreciation of goodness as expressed in candy.

R. C. Purdy, Limited

Maker of Purdy's Ice Cream

675 Granville Street

Vancouver, B.C.