

THE TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION FUND.*

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IT is peculiarly necessary, at the present juncture of educational affairs in Ontario, that the subject of this paper should receive more than an ordinary share of our attention, as Public School Teachers, and that, too, for a variety of reasons, all of which, for the nonce, may find culmination in the statement that the condition of the Fund is not only unsatisfactory, but most precarious.

Let us glance for a little at the history of the scheme.

It is, I presume, quite unnecessary for me to say, that, to the former venerable Chief Superintendent of Education, the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, is due the whole credit, however much or little that may be, of having had this pension system engrafted upon the statutes of the Province for the special behoof of common school teachers. We find that the scheme received the sanction of the Legislature in 1854. The Act provided that those teachers who saw fit might contribute to the fund at the rate of \$4 *per annum*, without, so far as I am aware, fixing upon any definite sum the recipient of a pension was certain of being paid. For fifteen years this arrangement was carried on, and met with only scant support from the profession. Year after year did Dr. Ryerson appeal to the teachers to stand by him, and assist in making the fund what he had fondly hoped it would become. In vain, however, to

a very great extent, were these entreaties addressed to us, notwithstanding that they promised, in good faith, far more than an equivalent for our outlay. The reasons for this apathy were not far to seek. Dr. Ryerson himself, quoting from the reports of Local Superintendents, said, "In regard to the *classes* of teachers opposed to or in favour of the (superannuation) clause they almost invariably reported the former of these to be, 'those who do not intend to continue long in the profession of school-teaching,' 'young men who intend to teach only until they can secure money sufficient to carry them through college, or into something else,' 'persons who intend to make teaching a stepping-stone to something else,' 'those who look more at the money than at the principle involved,' 'those who have received partial or incorrect information on the subject,' 'those who are opposed to compulsion in every form,' and, 'those who oppose the scheme on various grounds.'"

If my memory serves me aright, another objection, and, I think, one of the principal, was the humiliating form of application the worn-out teacher had to sign before being allowed to become a pensioner. For my own part, I must confess I could never see any force in this objection, although like so many more I was opposed to supporting the Fund.

In requesting to be enrolled as a pensioner the applicant had to state: 1st, How old he was; 2nd, Where he

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