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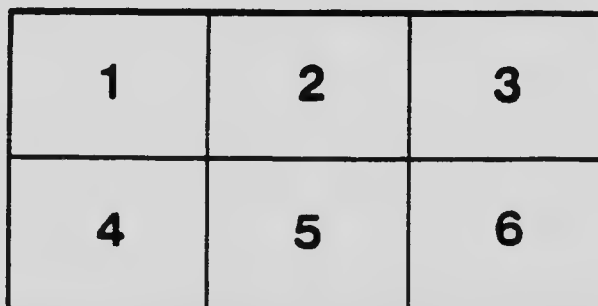
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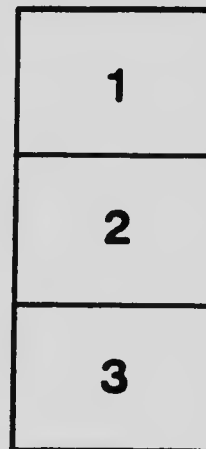
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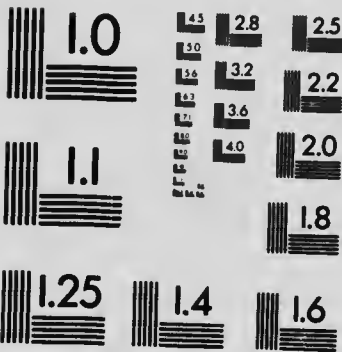
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# REPORT OF THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION of PROTESTANT TEACHERS OF QUEBEC

Mr. President, Members of Convention,

At the last convention of this Association you saw fit to appoint a committee whose duty was to carry on propaganda looking to the enactment of a law of Compulsory School Attendance in this province. The following members of convention were named to act on the committee: I. O. Vincent (Convener), Rev. E. I. Rexford (former Sec'y of the Dept. of Public Inst.), C. A. Adams (Pres.), Miss Amy Norris (Ex-pres.), Sinclair Laird (Dean of the School for Teachers), Miss I. E. Brittain (Vice-pres.), Mrs. E. A. Irwin (Representative on the Protestant Committee), J. W. McOnat (Inspector), I. Gammell, W. C. R. Anderson (Sec'y of Committee, 2044 Esplanade Ave., Montreal).

Owing to the pressure of other duties Inspector McOnat resigned and Inspector Rothney was named by the President to take his place. The committee regret that owing to the continued indisposition of Mr. Sinclair Laird they were in large measure deprived of his valuable advice and assistance.

At the first meeting of the committee it was decided that as a preliminary to any systematic propagandist activity, it was necessary to study (1) the school attendance situation in our province and (2) contemporary School Attendance Laws of the sister provinces, (3) to gather information that would result in the members of the committee becoming somewhat familiar with the child labour situation here and with child labour legislation here and elsewhere.

That we may more fully appreciate the significance of the educational situation in this province, it seems desirable to preface the report with a brief statement of the origin and prevalence of school attendance laws among the countries of the civilized world, followed by a summary of recent educational activities that indicate the movement elsewhere towards a higher standard of education.

## THE ORIGIN AND PREVALENCE OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

It is a mistaken idea to suppose that Prussia was the first modern state to use compulsion to bring its children to school. It was in 1713 that Frederick William I issued orders that were later embodied in a law. But 80 years before, while the predecessor of the present Kaiser was only the Elector of the Mark of Brandenburg, the colony of Massachusetts, through its General Court, passed an

enactment to "redress the evil caused by the great neglect of many parents and masters in training up their children in learning and labour". Near the close of the 17th century the Estates of Navarre in France passed a similar enactment, 20 years at least before Prussia did so.

At the outbreak of the war every state in Europe had acknowledged the principle of an attendance enactment of some sort, except Russia. Even Turkey as long ago as 1869 adopted the principle. The Kingdoms that once formed part of Turkey have all declared primary education compulsory, and so has Finland and even the Duchy of Luxemburg. Several states of Europe have extended the principle to secondary or continuation schools. The last country to adopt it was Belgium in May 1914.

In the British Empire all Australian and New Zealand, all of the Union of South Africa and many of the smaller colonies have adopted it. All the provinces of our own Dominion have adopted it except Quebec. The only other self-governing part of the British Empire that has not adopted such a law is Newfoundland. The Minister of Education for Newfoundland admits in a letter to your Committee the need for such a law for that colony and wishes your Committee all success. And in his last report (1917) the chief Inspector of Catholic Schools for Newfoundland urges the adoption of such a law at least for the cities. Will Quebec not follow that lead?

In the United States of America not a single State is without some sort of attendance law; six states added such clauses to their education laws within the last eight years.

In Asia, Japan has an attendance law; while in South America several of the Latin republics have adopted such laws as a part of their educational systems. At the present time the matter is one of much importance and is being seriously considered in Chili, Peru, Argentina and Uruguay.

The important thing to note regarding all these countries with their different laws for enforcing attendance, is that there is absolutely no case on record of a country that has rescinded such an enactment. Some of these laws are not as well enforced as they might be; but where they have been enforced properly and for some considerable time, we invariably find an insistent demand for the extension of the period of compulsion to the

higher classes and the practical abolition of illiteracy. The utility of such a law is proved by such a consensus gentium; and those whose judgment in this matter is worth the most are the ones who have tried faithfully to carry out such a law. Such peoples and many others are improving their attendance laws for the benefit of the children; Quebec with all its need has none to improve.

### RECENT MOVEMENTS ELSEWHERE TOWARD MORE AND BETTER EDUCATION

The war has accentuated the demand for more education for the children of the common people as being essential to the economic and political welfare of any country.

Some months ago, in speaking of conditions after the war, Mr. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, said that when the soldiers returned after the war, they would undoubtedly demand that the England for which they had made such sacrifices should be a better England than it had been in the past with better and more nearly equal advantages for all; continuing he said, "Obviously the first requirement of a better England must be Better Education and especially MORE EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE PEOPLE". It is evident that the Members of the Parliament are in agreement with that statement for they have since passed the Fisher Educational Bill. This legislation provides among other things for £3,200,000 (\$16,000,000) per year of "new money" for higher salaries (better teachers) and pensions for the teachers of the elementary schools. The bill abolishes half time attendance, restricts the employment of children, establishes a school-leaving age of 14 without exception, provides for the extension of compulsory attendance to 15 at the option of the local authorities, and enacts compulsory attendance in continuation schools to the extent of 280 hours instruction per year up to the age of 16 years for the present and eventually after a lapse of seven years to the age of 18.

In Scotland the school-leaving age is being raised to 15, and provision is being made such that no person shall for lack of means be deprived of the fullest education of which he is capable.

Just before the war Belgium adopted a compulsory school attendance law. The question had been advocated in that country since about 1882 by the Liberal party; but they combined obligatory attendance with neutral schools, thereby undoubtedly postponing the adoption of the former. The Attendance Law was passed in May, 1914 by the Catholic ministry of Baron de Broqueville: the strenuous opposition of the aged leader of the ultra-conservative wing of the Catho-

lic party was finally overcome and in the Legislature Mr. Woeste was a strong supporter of the measure. The fact that provided the strongest reason for the adoption of the law was the persistently large number of illiterates found year after year in the successive classes of military recruits. Adjoining and nearby countries had through effective school attendance laws reduced illiteracy to a minimum.

It is to be noted that the Belgian Elementary Educational System allows the greatest possible freedom both active and passive; the new law made no radical change except in the one matter of attendance at school being obligatory, the choice of school being left entirely to the parent as before.

Shortly after the entrance of the U.S. into the war, her educational leaders, alarmed by the falling off in school attendance and the increase in juvenile crime in the other warring countries, took counsel. As a result, every effort was made by the educational authorities and all whom they could influence, to see that there should be no curtailment of provisions for education and the regular attendance of the children in the schools. The U.S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. P. P. Claxton, issued an appeal, a clarion call to the nation and the nation's leaders in the pulpit, the factory, and the home, asking that all should unite in keeping up the standard of education and the regular attendance of pupils. He said, "When the war is over, whether in a few months or after many years, there will be such demands upon this country for men and women of scientific knowledge, technical skill and general culture as have never before come to any country. The world must be rebuilt. This country must play a far larger part than it has in the past in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce, and also in the things of cultural life, art, literature, music, and scientific discovery."

If we in Canada, if we in old Quebec, are to attain to any important position in the world that is to be, do not these things apply equally to us?

In the United States as in Canada, Education is a function of the state parliament, not that of the federal government. Nevertheless, as an evidence of its growing realization of how directly national welfare and progress depend on the adequate education of its citizens, Congress passed in 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act. This act sets aside \$38,000,000 of federal money to be spent in eight years on account of salaries for teachers in vocational and industrial schools.

In Canada, since the war began, two provinces, the last two except our own, have placed school attendance acts for the first time upon their statute books; Manitoba in March, 1916; Saskatchewan in the spring

of 1917. Nova Scotia amended and greatly improved its attendance law in 1916, while Alberta in 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918 added to and amended its law until it has now one of the best and most effective attendance laws in Canada. They have made education compulsory to the age of 16 years.

The province of Ontario has in comparatively recent years inaugurated a system of Continuation Schools. Her educational leaders are now advocating compulsory attendance at these schools for children from 14-16 years of age. In advocating this step the Director of Industrial and Technical Education for Ontario says: "AN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IS NECESSARY AS A FOUNDATION FOR ALL FORMS OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. But it is evident that, no matter how perfect the system (of vocational education), the aims to be realized cannot be attained unless the attendance of those to be educated can be secured for THE COMPLETE COURSE OFFERED."

The compulsory school law of Ontario, being an old law, is admittedly defective. Year after year it has been a dead letter in many rural sections. There has been strong criticism in the Ontario legislature of its non-effectiveness, a criticism led by Mr. Proudfoot. He believes the remedy to lie in making the attendance officers the appointees of the school authorities instead of the police commission. The Department of Education, in opposing Mr. Proudfoot's bill, admitted defects, but apparently did not agree that his bill was a complete remedy. They asked that the bill be withdrawn on the ground that the department was studying the whole matter carefully.

The Hon. Dr. Cody, the new Minister of Education for Ontario, in a recent speech before his constituents in Toronto stated that in his opinion public sentiment (in Ontario) after the war would demand the extension of the Compulsory School Age to 16 years. In a later speech he is reported as saying, "I consider it most uneconomical to chop off education at the age of 14; in doing that we are not getting value for the money spent." In view of the foregoing statements of the Department and of Dr. Cody, we may reasonably look for the superseding of the present antiquated law of our sister province by an effective modern law at no distant date.

But material welfare, essential as it is, is not the only objective to be reached by more and better education of the youth of a democracy. Mr. Fisher has said, "No people which does not respect education will demand and support good government". Dr. Claxton puts it this way, "Democracy requires for success universal knowledge, intelligence

and virtue of a high degree, and it must protect itself from weakness and corruption within as well as from forceful invasion without".

If then, as we see, there is a general recognition elsewhere of the necessity of a higher general standard of education, how are we in this province responding? What have we done and what are we going to do to fit our boys and girls to meet the competition of their better educated competitors of the sister provinces and of foreign countries?

Can it be that we in Quebec feel we have reached the ultimate goal in our provisions for an intelligent citizenry and skilled workmen, who who stand perhaps alone among the democracies of the earth in retaining school fees as one means of support for our elementary schools and in the lack of any legislation requiring our children to attend school?

But perhaps conditions of attendance, as has been so often claimed, are so good that we do not need a School Attendance Law. Let us examine the validity of this claim.

### THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SITUATION IN QUEBEC.

From the beginning your committee has been mindful of the fact that there has been much improvement in educational facilities in this province in recent years. It has not been forgetful of the deep interest taken in educational matters by the government and especially by the Prime Minister; of the greatly increased grants for better buildings, equipment and teaching; of the steps taken to encourage technical training through building a number of handsome, splendidly equipped technical schools. The very substantial progress made in the matter of providing better training for teachers, modernizing the course of study, increasing salaries, building and equipping modern fireproof schools in the urban centers and better schools in the rural sections, have not failed to impress all with the evidence that the Province of Quebec offers splendid opportunities TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE AND HAVE THE MEANS TO take advantage of them. But through daily contact with the situation the committee were persuaded that the youth of the Province have not been getting anywhere near the full benefit of these facilities. Such a condition of affairs is a millstone around the neck of progress; as the head of the New York Bureau of Attendance has said, "Expenditure on school buildings and equipment may be lavish, courses of study may be modernized, methods of instruction may be vitalized, school management may be vibrant with a social consciousness, but all these fail unless in the last analysis the



child comes regularly for his educational heritage".

The most common and, to the uninformed or superficial reader, the most effective argument against a School Attendance Act has been the claim that Quebec's record of attendance ranks second in Canada, being higher without an attendance law than that of all but one of the other provinces, all of which have now attendance laws. To opponents of compulsion who are under this impression a compulsory law is not merely a vexatious measure, an interference with so-called parental rights, but what is far less defensible, a needless interference with such rights.

Now to a body of educationalists and teachers who know from daily observation and contact with the situation the pitifully inadequate amount of education of a large number of the children who leave our schools and enter the ranks of industry or work on the streets, the need of some measure that will secure an improvement is at once apparent. The same is true of the social workers and court officials who daily come into painful contact with the product of these conditions. But for others to whom these facts are not so self-evident, your Committee will present some data and especially comparative statistics that reveal things as they are.

For this purpose a considerable correspondence was necessary to procure the recent educational reports from the several provinces and later on to get interpretations of terms, statistics, and methods of procedure. For the unflinching courtesy and generous co-operation of the various Departments of Education in the different provinces by prompt and full reply, and particularly for the courtesy of our own officials at Quebec and for their readiness to furnish us with all possible information, your Committee wishes to express its thanks.

Educational investigation would be greatly facilitated by the use in all provinces of a standard method of reporting statistics and the definition of terms used in educational reports, as they are explained in the reports from Nova Scotia or New York City.

In this connection it may be said that there is a movement in the western provinces tending towards the introduction of certain standardized statistics in educational reports. After the experience your Committee has had during the past year, we wish to bring this movement to the attention of Convention and to express our conviction that educational reports would be of greatly enhanced value, and infinitely more intelligible to the ordinary reader, if the statistics from different provinces were given under the same general terms, based on the same general data, and

made out in the same manner; or failing that, if the terms and methods used were explained, as in the Nova Scotia reports. It is the earnest hope of your Committee that this report, by showing up the differences of method and the inadequacy of our own method, may do something toward bringing about the accomplishment of standardized statistics.

From the Quebec report there is one notable and very serious omission: it does not give the Grand Total Days' Attendance made by all the pupils of the various classes of schools. The Department of Public Instruction does not seem to have this information, nor does it seem to have ever suggested itself to our officials to ask the schools at the end of the year to furnish the Aggregate Attendance, though a casual glance at the reports of the U. S. Commission of Education or of the other provinces of Canada might have suggested the idea. Our average attendance is made up from the Inspectors' Bulletins, but at the end of the year the Secretary Treasurer of each School Board or of Trustees sends in an application for the government grant, and certain statistics for the whole year are given in this application form, but nowhere is the Aggregate Attendance given. There is no reason why it should not be given on this form. It is very difficult for your Committee to understand why this figure has been omitted for so long in our reports. It is an item generally recognized elsewhere as of such fundamental importance that it is published in most of the other provincial reports; other information is given in the Saskatchewan and Manitoba reports from which this item can be calculated. It is computed for all the States of the United States of America, so far as your Committee is aware. When the Grand Total Days' Attendance is given, it is possible to compute the average number of days each enrolled pupil attends per year. This latter figure is of the greatest importance, much more important than the per cent of average attendance; the former shows clearly just how much schooling per year each pupil is getting, the latter figure as made up in Quebec and in several other provinces absolutely ignores the length of the school term and is not based on the same set of factors in the various provinces. At present there is no way of calculating this item which is such an interesting factor as indicating the need or otherwise of compulsory measures. Your Committee suggests that Convention should respectfully request the Protestant Committee to take measures to obtain and have published in the annual reports the Grand Total Days' Attendance made in the various classes of schools.

With reference to the often repeated claim that this province with its voluntary system of attendance ranks second among the provin-



ees of the Dominion in its percent of average attendance, though the other provinces have all had to resort to compulsory laws, the following considerations are submitted. If this argument from the per cent of attendance is logically valid, no more telling one could be advanced as a counter attack to any general offensive on the laissez-faire theory.

As ordinarily understood and as generally computed the per cent of average attendance is the ratio expressed in hundredths which the average number of pupils daily present bears to the total enrolment for the school term, or for the school year, or sometimes to the average monthly enrolment; in simple words it is the ratio between the attendance and the enrolment.

The per cent of attendance is not computed in the same manner in the different provinces nor is it based on the same factors, and therefore provides no reasonable basis of comparison as between provinces in estimating the comparative status of the attendance of school age children.

This average attendance is computed in several different ways in the different provinces, being so computed in some provinces that they have a very much higher apparent percent relatively than the facts justify. The most generally adopted plan is for each school district or for each section or unit that sends in a report to the Department to report the average daily attendance made. This figure is the quotient obtained by dividing the Grand Total Days' Attendance by the number of days the schools of that particular district were open during the period. Take an example: if the aggregate attendance of a district was 120,000 and the number of days the schools of the district were open was 150, then the average daily attendance would be 120,000 divided by 150 = 800. And if the enrolment was 1000, the percent of attendance for that school district would be 80 p.c. The average daily attendance for the province by this plan would be the sum of the averages for the different schools, while the percent would still be the ratio of average attendance to enrolment. According to this plan one takes the actual number of days the schools of each district were open as the divisor and makes up the average attendance of the district from that. The schools of some districts may be open 180 days, those of another only 90, each district uses as divisor the number of days its own schools were open. According to this plan all short term schools can make as good a percent of attendance as long term schools; this all tends to keep up the provincial average of attendance.

But in certain other provinces the method followed to get the average attendance is to divide the aggregate attendance for the prov-

ince by the number of legally authorized teaching days, which number may run up as high as 200, 205 or even 215. Let us see how such a method would reduce the percent of attendance in the case of the school just mentioned, if it was situated in a province where the legally authorized number of teaching days is 200. Then the average attendance will be 120,000 divided by 200 instead of 150, and the result is 600 pupils while the percent is 60 though the aggregate attendance and enrolment are the same as before. Such a method penalizes the short term school and tends to make it increase its term, but it also lowers the provincial percent of attendance as shown. A province that uses this method suffers a considerable handicap in the average attendance reported and also in the percent of attendance. Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta follow this method and are thus handicapped. In Manitoba the aggregate attendance for all the schools in 1916-17 was 14,394,709½ and the legal number of teaching days was 208; 14,394,709½ divided by 208 = 69,209, which was the average attendance for the whole province for that year as reported by the minister.

The province of Saskatchewan again has a different method. The teachers are instructed to compute the percent of attendance for the month. Then the percent of attendance for the year is not based on the yearly enrolment, but the monthly percentages of attendance are averaged to form a yearly percent. Moreover the Department of Education there, realizing that the percent of attendance is largely a matter of book keeping has suggested to their Inspectors yet another plan of working out the percent of attendance; it would then be the ratio between the possible attendance per month and the actual attendance. That is if any child was enrolled late in the month, his possible attendance would be the number of school days from the date of his enrolment to the end of the month. We believe this latter plan has not yet been adopted.

But Quebec follows none of these methods of computing its percent of attendance. We have a method which is unique among the provinces; it may be historic too. Just how much this unique method has to do with determining our vaunted superiority as to percent of attendance is not easy to determine with mathematical exactitude, but we will show how it tends to raise the figures. This is how it is done. The average attendance to date is reported in the Inspectors' Bulletin on the occasion of his second visit to the school for the year. The sum of these averages is the average for the province. The percent is computed in the customary way but includes the enrolment only to the date of the Inspector's visit. Thus our average at-

tendance is not the average attendance for the year but only for such part of it as the school has been open to the date of the Inspector's visit. This may occur at any time from February to the beginning of June.

It is well known that many children in attendance during the winter months drop out before the term closes, there being no means of preventing them. This happens particularly in May and June. The Inspector would visit most of the schools before that date and so their average attendance would not thus be lowered by this fact. Again, in the rural communities in all provinces many children start school for the first time in the spring; whereas these children by an accurate method of computation could only make a possible of perhaps 20 p.c. or 30 p.c. of attendance, in Quebec they are completely ignored in all cases where the Inspector has visited the school previous to their entrance. Of course such a method must show up to the advantage of the school or province that uses it, as compared with the others that use the figures for the whole year. Moreover, there is no mention made in the report to show that these figures for attendance are not for the whole year. This again shows the need of definition, or, better still, of standardized statistics. This method is haphazard and inexact; at best it is a very insecure foundation on which to claim an advantage over the other provinces.

We see then that the Quebec method, while absolutely unique, so far as your Committee knows, as a method of computing attendance, gives Quebec three advantages over the methods prevailing elsewhere. (1) Quebec does not suffer any reduction in average attendance by pupils dropping out of school after the Inspector's visit. (2) Quebec does not suffer any reduction by reason of the short attendance of pupils who begin after this same visit, which may be as early as February. (3) Quebec suffers no deduction by the short term of some of its schools, as Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta suffer.

Not merely has our manner of working out the average attendance these three advantages, which are considerable, but it is not a true percent of attendance for the year.

Surely the Manitoba method gives a more complete representation of the attendance situation if we are to use the percent as the one figure to show the condition of attendance; besides, from our method it is impossible to calculate the number of days per year each child on the average attends school. About 30 years ago the reports did show how many months the schools were open; this gave some indication, though of a somewhat too general nature, as to the amount of schooling the children were get-

ting per year. Your Committee does not understand why this valuable information is no longer given.

There is a fourth advantage which we enjoy over three of the provinces, namely Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The school report for these provinces is for the calendar year, while ours is for the natural school year from one summer holiday to the next. The disadvantage which these provinces suffer from this custom in reporting statistics is as follows: much the largest proportion of children beginning school start in the fall. In Quebec this is at the beginning of the school year and hence it is possible for these children to make 100 per cent of attendance if they attend regularly throughout the year. But in Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan the opening of the schools in the fall is well past the middle of the statistical school year and hence such pupils can only make about 40% of attendance even though present every day from the opening of school in September till the Christmas holidays. What brings down the percent of average attendance of individual pupils for a school year similarly affects the annual provincial average attendance.

Is it not therefore evident that the percent of attendance is a most unreliable and indeed misleading item from which to get a true conception of the relative status of school attendance in the several provinces? That being so, we must base our judgment of attendance conditions on other data.

The present school census is not accurate and is a census in part only: the figures for the cities are based on an estimate.

A most vital consideration in determining the need of legislative measures for improving school attendance, is the question of the number of school age children unenrolled from year to year. Unfortunately there are no accurate statistics of recent date available. One would expect to get this information from the school census, for we have such a census. But this census is not taken at all in Montreal, Quebec, Sherbrooke, Hull and elsewhere—cities whose aggregate population is nearly half that of the whole province. Your Committee regrets to be obliged to report that no mention is made in the annual reports of the Department of Public Instruction of the omission of proper census figures from these cities; figures are given which were made up in the Department itself (X). Surely this is not the degree of accuracy and candour the

(X) Your Committee has recently been informed from the Department of Public Instruction that "the percentage between the enrolment and the census for the districts where the census is taken is the one applied in the case of cities where the census is not taken."

public expects from official reports, when figures are estimated to cover up large deficiencies in the sources of information; and yet no mention is made in the report that such figures are only an estimate. One has to be a part of the system to find out such facts. Moreover, "the census which the secretary-treasurers must take each year, under article 2768 of the Education Act, of school children, is often not carefully taken." Your Committee would hardly be so bold as to use these words without proper assurance. Our authority is that of the Superintendent himself; they are a quotation from a circular letter, dated Jan. 22nd, 1917, to the School Commissioners and Trustees. He goes on to say: "Sometimes the figures supplied me by the secretary-treasurers do not coincide with those given by the Inspector in his annual report. How can this difference be explained seeing that the figures refer to the same locality and are supplied by the same secretary-treasurer? Moreover it happens that the number of children enrolled in the school is larger than that given by the census." (See page 430 of 1916-17 report, English version). This is not the first complaint made of the inaccuracy of the census; in the 1915-16 report, Hon. Boucher de la Bruère made a similar complaint.

In the Quebec Statistical Year Book for 1917, p. 164, we find the figures for the school census and enrolment recorded for the different electoral districts; the figures are for the school year 1914-15. Let us examine them in some detail. Sherbrooke had 3,958 of school age and 4,893 enrolled. If these figures were exact, that was an appalling situation when only 54½ p.c. of the children of school age were enrolled. Either these figures were very inexact or else they provide one of the strongest possible cases to show the need of an attendance law. But were the figures exact? No census is taken in Sherbrooke. Then how were they obtained? Drummondville had

4,586 children on the census and exactly the same number enrolled. But no census is taken in Drummondville and the similarity between the two figures suggests that what we are assured happens in other cases, may have happened here, that the secretary-treasurer instead of making a proper census merely copied the figures for the yearly enrolment as those of the census also. Your Committee is assured by the Inspectors that this sometime happens. One Inspector states that, to his knowledge, the secretaries do not as a rule make a tour from house to house, throughout the municipality. To quote his own words: "Some secretaries make it up with the aid of the teachers or the commissioners resident in the various districts. It follows that in the larger municipalities the figures given approximate to the number of pupils, while in the smaller municipalities of one or two districts the census given is fairly accurate." The census figures given in this Year Book for Montreal City were 66,161 of school age and 59,405 enrolled. Your Committee challenges these figures for those of school age; how were they obtained? Your Committee knows no census was taken for the city of Montreal. Moreover the ratio between the figures is practically the same as that between the enrolment and the census for the whole province, namely 89.6 p.c.

In 1910-11 more than 134,000 children between 5 and 16 years of age were not enrolled. Other considerations would seem to show that in any one year between 25 and 30 per cent of the children of school age are NOT enrolled in school.

To get accurate figures for the number of children of school age in Quebec your Committee had recourse to the Dominion Census for 1911. The figures were obtained from Bulletin XVIII. Let us compare them with those for the school census and enrolment for the school year 1911.

Ages	Dominion Census	School Census	School Enrolment (X)	
			Public Schools	Classical Colleges
5-7 . . . . .	106,772	92,808	72,320	2,193
7-14 . . . . .	328,959	290,174	230,879	2,729
14-16 . . . . .	55,309	67,637	28,373	
Totals . . . . .	521,040	450,619	386,496	

(Y) These figures include practically all the children of these ages who are in school anywhere in the Province. The public school enrolment includes 36,541 children in Catholic Independent Schools such as convents etc.; the enrolment in these schools is divided as follows — Independent Elementary Schools 3,441, Independent Model Schools 12,881, Independent Academies 21,219. The total of 36,541 will include practically all children enrolled in Independent Church Schools, since, according to section 2734, subsection 5, of the school law, private education-

al establishments receiving no grant from the municipality in which they are situated but wishing to take advantage of the exemption from taxation granted to religious or educational institutions, are obliged to make each year to the Superintendent a report showing the enrolment etc, and giving all other information required by the Superintendent. The only children who may not be counted will be a few hundred in private schools and some children receiving tuition at home.

These figures present a method of finally judging the school census. At that time it was 70,421 in error. That number, representing the children who were absolutely ignored in the official calculations, is larger than that of Wellington's army at Waterloo or considerably larger than the four divisions of the C. E. F. now in France.

Now let us compare the enrolment with the Dominion Census to see how many children were not enrolled. Of those aged 5 and 6 there were 34,452 not enrolled, of those aged 7 to 14 there were 45,887 not enrolled, and of those 14 and 15 there were not less than 54,205 not enrolled. Or consider the figures as percentages; of those 5 and 6 there were enrolled 67.7 p.c., of those 7 to 14 there were enrolled 86.5 p.c. and of those 14 and 15 only 36.5 p.c. were enrolled. Your Committee beg to emphasize the fact that of those aged 7 to 14 (until lately the compulsory ages in most other countries and provinces), only 86.5 p.c. were enrolled in Quebec. **OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN 5 TO 16 THERE WERE 134,544 NOT ENROLLED AT ALL DURING THAT WHOLE SCHOOL YEAR OR 25.8 P.C. OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL AGE POPULATION.**

To show that it is possible to get all these children of school age into school your Committee begs to quote the case of Denmark. The compulsory age there is from 7 to 14 with no exceptions. The law is enforced so carefully that practically all children attend. According to the official figures of January 1st, 1911, out of a school population of 377,066 there were only 370 children not enrolled, or one per thousand; in the rural communities it is estimated that only 1 p.c. of the children are not enrolled. The result is seen in their percent of illiteracy; they have the remark-

ably low percent of 0.54. Of course such a result is possible only after one whole generation has had the benefit of compulsory attendance. Or let us make a comparison with one of the Canadian provinces, Nova Scotia. This province does allow exemptions so that poor boys may go to work one or two years before reaching the upper limit of the compulsory age. The Superintendent of Education assures us that there were only 6,503 reported as not attending; this number would include truants and those who had permits to go to work. This is out of a total enrolment of 109,189. Moreover the enrolment in Nova Scotia, including over 9,000 children who are over the school age, which is fifteen, is actually higher than the number of children of school age; the school-age population is 106,038 and the enrolment of all classes, including high school classes, is 109,189, i.e. 103 p.c. of the school age population. If we were to do the same for Quebec for 1911 and add to the children of school age those over that age in the academies and model schools, namely 7,549, and 2,218 over 16 in Classical Colleges, we would have a total of 396,263 out of a school population of 521,040, i.e. our gross enrolment in 1911 was 76 p.c. of the school age population. Surely when Quebec has so many children of school age not enrolled at all, the matter of school attendance, notwithstanding our vaunted percent of attendance, is a really serious problem.

Let us note the average attendance for the children of school age for 1911 and compare it with the census to see what percent of the school age population were on an average in school every day the schools were open. The figures for the different classes of schools were as follows:

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Average Attendance</i>	<i>Percent. of Attendance</i>
Elementary . . . . .	226,438	167,168	73.82
Model . . . . .	106,386	86,758	81.55
Academy . . . . .	56,299	47,752	84.82
<b>Totals (public schools)</b>	<b>389,123</b>	<b>301,678</b>	<b>77.53</b>
Over 16 . . . . .	—7,549	—6,403	—
Total 5—16 . . . . .	381,574	295,275	—
Classical Colleges:—			
(aged 7—16) . . . . .	4,922	4,495	91.33
<b>Grand Total . . . . .</b>	<b>386,496</b>	<b>299,770</b>	<b>—</b>

According to the report there were 7,549 of these 389,123 children who were over 16. Practically all these 7,549 children will be in Academy grades and will make a good percent of attendance. Let us apply the percent made by the academy grades to this figure to see what the average attendance of these 7,549 children was; then by subtracting this from 301,678, which was the average attendance for all in these schools, we will find the

average attendance of those up to 16. The average attendance of these overage pupils works out to 6,403 days. When this is taken away from the 301,678, it leaves 295,275 as the average attendance in public schools up to 16 years of age. To this we must add the average attendance for pupils under 16 in Classical Colleges, namely 4,495. Therefore out of 521,040 children of school age there were in average attendance every day the

schools were open only 292,770 children, or 57.5 p.c. of the school-age population. Bear in mind that these figures are only exact to the time of the Inspector's visit and thereby give our Province the advantages before enumerated: omission of the factor of the short term and omission of the attendance during the far end of the year. If they had been worked out as in Ontario, there would be two other factors that would have brought these figures still lower: namely the fact that Ontario uses the legal number of teaching days to compute average attendance, and the further fact that their school year begins in January, as already explained. If any one imagined the percent of average attend-

ance meant the ratio between attendance and the whole school population, he can see this ratio is only 57.5 p.c., not 80 p.c.

Some very interesting statistics were given in the Canada Year Book of 1913 on page 95. The editor of the Canada Year Book assures us that these figures were made up entirely from the Dominion Census statistics; they are therefore quite independent of all the variations which we found to trouble us in comparing educational statistics from the provincial reports. In the Year Book the figures are given for male and female; we will combine them. The figures are for ages 10-14.

	N. S.	N. H.	Que.	Ont.	P. E. I.
School Population. . . . .	51,746	38,239	222,172	233,018	10,518
At School . . . . .	43,199	31,412	175,038	195,517	9,120
Percentages. . . . .	83.5	82.2	78.8	83.9	86.5

Note that Quebec has 5% less of its pupils at school than the average of the other eastern Provinces. If Quebec in 1911 had had as many of her children at school as the average of these provinces, she would have had 11,000 more of these ages alone enrolled. Moreover New Brunswick has only local option and does not enforce attendance throughout the whole province. In Table 5 of Bulletin XIX (on School Attendance) of the last Dominion Census, we find a very interesting comparison. This gives the percentages of the population of ages 15 to 17 who are enrolled and not enrolled. Quebec has only 19.36 attending, Prince Edward Island has 33.92 attending, Nova Scotia has 33.17, New Brunswick has 34.07. As a matter of fact Quebec here has the lowest percent of all the provinces, the next lowest being Saskatchewan with 25.16. The average for the whole of Canada is 27.14%. Why are these figures never quoted while so much emphasis is put on our percent of average attendance?

Some people have never stopped to think how much a child can learn at school for every year he stays after 12 years of age. It is then that the teacher can do the most for him. It is only then that he begins to build upon the foundation that has been laid in the earlier years when he was picking up the rudiments and learning to use the implements of knowledge. Such a child is then in fact becoming the heir of all the ages.

Of course it will at once be remarked with reference to this comparison of our attendance figures, etc. with the Dominion Census that such a comparison gives figures that are out of date. Your Committee admits that these figures are five years behind those of the latest report. But what reason is there for believing that present educational conditions are better than those of five years back? No ef-

fective measures have been taken to bring in those who were not attending then, or to retain those who were in attendance. Increased financial help from the Government will never solve the problem of school attendance; even where education is free, to wit, in Montreal, the problem is as pressing as anywhere. The sooner this fact is recognized, the better for the education of our children. Moreover the war conditions of today would rather indicate that conditions of attendance are less satisfactory than in 1911. The high cost of living, the greatly increased inducements for children to leave school, the demand for workers at attractive wages, combine to induce parents to withdraw their children from school at an early age. This contention is supported by the fact that the school census of the year 1916 gives the school-age population as 543,873, while the school enrolment for the same year for the ages 5-16 was 455,029. The difference between the school census and the enrolment is 88,844 as compared with a difference of 69,045 in 1911.

Let us now study the enrolment figures per grade. These figures are up to date, and are quite enough to prove our whole case. One has only to note how rapidly the enrolment drops after the third and fourth years to be convinced of the need of immediate reform.

The proportion of pupils remaining beyond the Fourth Grade in Protestant Schools, or beyond the third year in Roman Catholic Schools, is much smaller in Quebec than in Ontario, Nova Scotia and Alberta, as the following statistics will show.

(No study was made of the other provinces in this connection).



According to "Educational Statistics" for 1915-16, p. IX, the Quebec enrolment figures are as follows:

Year	Catholic	Protestant
First . . . . .	155,378	14,756
Second . . . . .	97,947	8,843
Third . . . . .	75,241	8,377
Fourth . . . . .	44,045	8,142
Fifth . . . . .	17,468	6,464
Sixth . . . . .	8,972	4,610
Seventh . . . . .	4,180	3,756
Eighth . . . . .	2,117	1,711
Ninth . . . . .		1,293
Tenth . . . . .		731
Eleventh . . . . .		416

The Head of the Bureau of Statistics, in the summary from which these numbers are taken, comments on the large number enrolled in the first year, and goes on to say: "But as we pass to the subsequent years of the primary course a striking decrease is noted and the number of pupils enrolled in the model course is relatively insignificant as compared with that of the elementary course and the same applies *a fortiori* to the pupils in Academies. It would perhaps," he says apologetically, "be advisable to add here, as a corrective, that a

**PROTESTANT SCHOOLS:—**

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enrolment . . . . .	14,756	8,843	8,377	8,142	6,464	4,610	3,756

**ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:—**

Years of course	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Enrolment . . . . .	155,378	97,947	75,241	44,045	17,465

**ONTARIO:—**

Readers	Primer	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Enrolment according to	131,844	72,898	102,972	100,023	90,050

As far as we can judge, the education obtained by the completion of the 7th grade of the Quebec Protestant Schools, the Fifth Year of the Syllabus of the Catholic Schools

great many pupils following the model and academy course attend independent schools such as colleges and convents." The latter remarks will apply chiefly to Catholics; there are very few Protestant children in academies that are not under Government inspection. And the total enrolment in Roman Catholic Classical Colleges in 1915-16 was only 7,096. The fact remains that the children of the masses are getting their education in the schools under control (X). Compare these figures with similar ones from Ontario for 1915; they are for the public schools only and do not include either high or continuation schools.

Primer . . . . .	131,844
First Reader . . . . .	72,898
Second Reader . . . . .	102,972
Third Reader . . . . .	100,023
Fourth Reader . . . . .	90,050
Fifth Reader and beyond . . . . .	7,287

In most schools the Fifth Reader is not used at all; the general procedure is to pass directly from the Fourth Reader to the High School.

For ease in comparison these figures are presented in tabular form below.

and the 4th Reader of the Ontario Schools would approximately correspond. The table enables the reader to judge as to which system retains its pupils the more successfully.

**Proportion of Pupils in Various Grades in Several Provinces as compared with the Number in Grade II (In Elementary Schools only. (XX))**

Grades	II Yr.	III Yr.	IV Yr.	V Yr.	VI Yr.	VII Yr.	VIII Yr.	Date
Quebec . . . . .	100 p.c.	87.7 p.c.	82.5 p.c.	60.1 p.c.	37.4 p.c.	22.1 p.c.	15.3 p.c.	1916
N. S. . . . .	100 p.c.	92.5 p.c.	93.0 p.c.	84.2 p.c.	71.8 p.c.	51.8 p.c.	40.9 p.c.	1916
Alberta . . . . .	100 p.c.	108.2 p.c.	92.8 p.c.	74.3 p.c.	64.5 p.c.	46.8 p.c.	47.8 p.c.	1916

(X) These enrolment figures for the different grades of the Catholic course include 41,031 children enrolled in Independent Schools, as follows: Independent Elementary Schools 5,535, Independent Model Schools 10,167, Independent Academies 25,329. Practically all these schools report their statistics to the Department.

(XX) In order not to be unfair to our own province an adjustment has been made. Some time ago a sub-committee of the Catholic Committee recommended that their course should be rearranged so that the syllabi of grades 1 and, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, should become those of grades 1, 2 and 3; 4, 5 and 6; 7, 8 and 9 respectively. This was in order that the grades might approximate years of school work. Hence the enrolment for grades 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 5 and 6 was redistributed

among a series of hypothetical grades 1, 2 and 3; 4, 5 and 6; 7, 8 and 9. Any one who is not satisfied with the apportionment of the enrolment may make the comparison from the statistics as they are given in the report, when the percents will show no less to our advantage, or make an adjustment for himself, under the following limitations. The number of pupils in the first grade is invariably very much larger than that of grade two; in the other provinces it varies from 180 p.c. to 220 p.c. of grade two; We have taken it as 185 p.c. The other limitation is that the pupils of grades 1 and 2 of the report must form the enrolment for grades 1, 2 and 3; those of grades 3 and 4 the enrolment for grades 4, 5 and 6; etc. To the figures for these readjusted grades the enrolment figures for the Protestant schools have been added and the percent worked out.



In the above table, 80% of the pupils of grade 7 of the Protestant schools of Quebec were added to form their share of a grade 8 as there is no grade 8 below the high school course in their case. A careful study of the above table will show that Quebec's proportionate number in Grade 5 is only 75 p.c. of that of the other provinces; in Grade 6 about 55 p.c.; in Grade 7 it is 45 p.c. and in Grade 8 only 35 p.c.. Such is the difference in elimination in the upper grades between compulsory and voluntary systems of attendance.

The experience tables of the U. S. Bureau of Education show that in the United States "for every thousand pupils in Grade 1 in 1906-07, 111 should graduate from a 4 year High School", (i.e. after having COMPLETED 12 grades), in 1918". This is 11.1 p.c. In the Protestant Schools of Quebec there is an 11 year course; the children who started in grade 1 in 1905-06 should finish in 1916. There were 9,331 enrolled in Grade 1 in all the Protestant Elementary schools of the Province in 1905-06; the number enrolled in the last year of the High School course in 1915-6 was only 416, or 4.4 p.c. of those enrolled 11 years before. (It is well known that not all those enrolled in the final year complete the course but we have no figures

to show what the proportion of graduates would be; it would be considerably less than 416). In the Protestant Schools of the Province of Quebec, instead of having 11.1 p.c. who complete the High School course, we have only 4.4 p.c. enrolled in the final year. This is further evidence, if any were needed, to show among other things the absolute necessity of immediate measures being taken to keep our children in school.

The enrolment statistics for Montreal, when compared with those for cities under obligatory attendance laws, show a most alarming condition of non-attendance at school.

Here the attendance ought to be more satisfactory, as education in the public school classes is free and has been so for several years. Furthermore, in the Protestant High Schools there are a number of free scholarships, which help to maintain the enrolment in the upper grades of the elementary schools. The table below, giving the enrolment figures per grade, reveals the true situation. The figures for the Roman Catholic Schools are as given to the press last fall; those for the Protestant Schools are as published in the report for 1916-17.

	Kind.	1 yr.	2 yr	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.	6 yr.	7 yr.	8 yr.	9 yr.	10 yr.	11 yr
M. C. Schools	—	25,792	13,755	9,547	5,979	2,848	1,737	1,019	560	—	—	—
Prot. Schools	1,187	4,197	3,567	3,502	3,195	2,761	1,941	1,243	620	392	278	149

These figures represent the total number of children enrolled in the public and high schools of Montreal. No doubt there are a few thousand more of the children of the wealthy who were enrolled elsewhere — a few Protestant children in private schools and some Catholic girls in nunneries and boys in Classical Colleges. But the above figures represent the enrolment of the children of the masses. The totals are, for the Catholic Schools 61,237 and for the Protestant Schools 23,030, or a grand total of 84,267. But how many of these children ever get beyond the rudimentary stage of the three Rs? How many children are there beyond the third year of the Catholic course or beyond the fourth year of the Protestant course? The third year of the Catholic course, with its fewer yearly divisions, corresponds roughly with the Protestant fourth year. In the Catholic schools there are 49,094 children in the first three years and only 12,145 in the succeeding five grades of the course. In the Protestant schools there are 15,648 children in the Kind. and first four grades so that above that there are only 7,382 in the other seven grades. When taken together there are above the point in the course mentioned (in Roman Catholic Schools above the third year, in Protestant Schools above the fourth), only 19,527 children or 23.2 p.c. of those enrolled.

Your Committee asks the people of Montreal to consider carefully all that it means to the future welfare of their city when, of all the children of the Public and High Schools, there are only 19,527 or 23.2 p.c. of the total enrolment, at any one time beyond the most elementary stages. In Toronto, Ottawa and New York the proportions were respectively 33 p.c. (in 1916), 37 p.c. (in 1917) and 44 p.c. (in 1913). Surely free education without compulsion has not solved the problem of attendance in Montreal.

Next let us look into the relative proportion of pupils in the various grades of the elementary classes of city schools under compulsory attendance and under voluntary attendance. In this way we shall get some idea of the relative standing of the masses of the population as to the amount of schooling received. In this table the number of pupils in Grade 2 is taken as the basis of comparison; Grade 1 is a receiving Grade and conditions there are not normal. The figures for Montreal are for the Protestant Elementary Schools only and represent the average enrolment for a ten year period; it is difficult to compare the five Grades of the Catholic course with the eight Grades of these other cities.

	# Grade.	3	4	5	6	7	8	Date
Montreal . . .	100 p.c.	94.9 p.c.	80.9 p.c.	65.4 p.c.	46.0 p.c.	29.4 p.c.	—	1906-17
Toronto . . .	100 p.c.	92.4 p.c.	92.5 p.c.	103.2 p.c.	82.1 p.c.	61.8 p.c.	50 p.c.	1916
Ottawa . . .	100 p.c.	92.0 p.c.	66.0 p.c.	73.0 p.c.	56.6 p.c.	59.4 p.c.	50 p.c.	1917
New York . . .	100 p.c.	99.5 p.c.	98.3 p.c.	94.2 p.c.	85.3 p.c.	75.6 p.c.	56.6 p.c.	1913

It is readily seen from this table that while the proportion of pupils enrolled in Grades 3 and 4 in Montreal is about like that of the other cities, yet lower than the average of the three cities, there is a decided slump on reaching Grade 5, while in Grade 6 the relative proportion in the Montreal schools is only about 60 p.c. of what it is in cities under attendance laws. In Grade 7 it drops to about 40 p.c. of the proportion in the other three cities. Even if Grade 7 of our schools is considered equivalent to Grade 8 in the others, the proportion of children left in school is only 60 p.c. of the proportion that in Toronto, Ottawa and New York finish the Public School course. Remembering that our course is one year shorter than that of these cities, we see how much less schooling our children are getting.

It is interesting to note that in different European cities (X) having an eight grade elementary school course, the percent of children who finished the eighth grade was 99.46 p.c., 99.2 p.c., 99.77 p.c., 99.53 p.c., 99.67 p.c., 99.93 p.c., 98.31 p.c., 99.62 p.c., 99.4 p.c., 98.62 p.c., etc.

The proportion of children who remain in school after 12, 13 or 14 years of age is much greater in areas under attendance laws than in those which have voluntary attendance.

We give below the proportion of pupils of various ages in the elementary classes of the same cities (XX). (Information not being to hand for Catholic Schools giving the number of children in single age periods, we again use the figures for Protestant Schools only.)

	Standard	Aged 12	Aged 13	Aged 14	Aged 15	Source of data
Montreal (Prot.)	100 p.c.	80.0 p.c.	65.9 p.c.	44.3 p.c.	19.3 p.c.	Ages for January 1917
Toronto . . . . .	100 p.c.	88.4 p.c.	82.8 p.c.	56.1 p.c.	24.7 p.c.	For June 1917
Ottawa . . . . .	100 p.c.	99.1 p.c.	78.1 p.c.	49.3 p.c.	24.5 p.c.	For February 1917
New York . . . . .	100 p.c.	94.4 p.c.	87.0 p.c.	53.3 p.c.	22.8 p.c.	Report of 1913, p. 440.

In the Montreal elementary Schools (Protestant) there were 11,123 pupils aged 8-11. If as large a proportion of the 12, 13 and 14 year old pupils combined had been enrolled in these Montreal Schools as in the elementary schools of Toronto, there would have been 1,223 more pupils enrolled of these ages than there were, or more than 20 p.c. of the number actually enrolled. Such is the difference in attendance of the older children under compulsory and voluntary systems.

The following table, reproduced from the 1916 Report of the Chief Inspector for Toronto Schools, gives interesting information about "Dropping out of School".

Moved away from City . . . . .	3,299
LEFT SCHOOL ON BECOMING	
14 YEARS . . . . .	2,805
Passed H. S. or completed	
public school course . . . . .	2,218
Left to attend Technical, Separate	
or Private Schools . . . . .	761
Out of school owing to protracted	
illness . . . . .	443
Dropped out and absence unac-	
counted for	
(a) under compulsory age (8	
years) . . . . .	221
(b) between 8 and 14 years of age	
Granted exemption owing to needy	
circumstances . . . . .	176
Removed by death . . . . .	117

Physical disability other than ill-	
ness . . . . .	65
Excluded owing to mental deficiency	39

It will be noted that but 235 pupils of compulsory age out of 10,379 who dropped out of school, or only 235 out of a total enrolment of 71,352, left school in Toronto without a valid reason being known for their elimination. But what was the number who left when the law no longer compelled their attendance? It was 2,805, twelve times as many or more than 1/4 greater than the number who completed the course. What kept them till then but the effective working of the attendance law? The elimination is much greater proportionately in Montreal schools, and here it takes place at 12 and 13 years of age as well as at 14. It will be noted that

(X) See Bulletin No. 2 of 1914 of U. S. Bureau of Education.

(XX) In order to make the comparison on the basis of an eight year course, 80 p.c. of the pupils of the various ages in Grade 7 of the Montreal schools has been taken and a year added to their respective ages to form a Grade 8. As the standard of comparison we have taken, not the number of those aged 11 but 1/4 of those aged 8-11, as being a more stable standard than the number of any one age.

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

Alberta. But as the Bulletin so aptly remarks, "The statistics are presented for a younger age than that at which the children in the more newly settled portions of the country can attend school; besides the aboriginal population is included in the calculations. A better test of the relation between educational facilities and illiteracy is provided by the tables of literacy of Canadian born males over 21: (the figures for the females not given). For any unsatisfactory showing here our own school system is alone responsible as there has been practically no immigration from the other provinces into Quebec. There were in all Canada 137,060 illiterate Canadian born males over 21, and Quebec had over half of all these or 69,750; Ontario with a considerably larger population than Quebec had 26,516. Of Quebec's total number of Canadian born males over 21 there were 15.64 p.c. illiterate. It is possible to work out the figures for the illiterate voters. In all Canada there were 207,322 such and Quebec's share of these was 75,843, of whom 69,750 were a native product. Ontario had 43,504 such voters, of whom 26,516 were the native product. Quebec's proportion of the illiterate voters of the Dominion was 36½ p.c. Surely something of this difference is due to the fact that for over two generations Ontario has had an attendance law which has kept the boys in school so long that they never in after life lapsed into the class of illiterate voters.

It is interesting to compare the percentage of illiteracy of some of the European countries. These figures were obtained from the Report of the U. S. Commission of Education and the Statesman's Year Book of London. The figures are for 1910 or 1911. Denmark had 0.54 p.c., Norway and Sweden each had 0.11 p.c., Switzerland had 0.30 p.c., Holland 4.0 p.c. and France 4.9 p.c. These countries have had compulsory attendance laws for many years. Russia had no such law; 61 p.c. of her population were illiterate. At the outbreak of the war there was only one country of all Europe that had not adopted such a law, namely Russia. Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Spain and Belgium had all within a few years adopted such a law.

**A school attendance law would necessitate provision for several thousands of children of foreigners who have now no school rights.**

In February 1915 a sub-committee reported to the Protestant Committee on the educational facilities of the foreign element in Montreal; Mr. Howard Murray was convener of this sub-committee. It found that there were about 1000 children of Russians, Poles and Hungarians, 600 of Bulgarians, Roumanians and Ruthenians, 1000 of Greeks and Syrians and 1000 of other nationalities, or a total of 3600 of these children of school age. For

all of these no legal provision was made in the school law, which was drafted before these peoples came to our country. Most of those mentioned above are members of either the Greek or Russian Orthodox Churches, and according to the wording of our school law are classed neither as Roman Catholics nor as Protestants: they are not considered at all. No child of parents who are members of these churches, has any legal rights in the schools, and therefore if admitted at all is subject to the payment of a very heavy school fee. It seems the usual practice with both School Boards to demand a certificate either from the priest or pastor to certify that the particular children are communicants or attendants at a Church or Sunday School, before such children can be admitted without fees. Practically none of them are in the public schools. A few Churches are trying to carry on classes, particularly night classes, for young people of these nationalities; that is all that is being done. Their own Churches in 1915 were doing no educational work. As regards the Italians, of whom there were about 17,000 in Montreal at that time, and about 1000 children, some would be found in the Roman Catholic Schools, being the children of communicants. But this would not account for all such children. Mr. Murray's Committee thought that the total number of foreign children in Montreal without regular school facilities would be about 5,000. Here we see other defects of our school law laid bare; it was not planned to meet such a situation as this. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant School Boards have been unable to undertake the permanent and free education of these children. Within the last few years both Boards have been hard pressed to get accommodation for their own children in view of the rapid increase of population and the growth of districts by annexations. But that is no reason for burking the whole question till a more convenient season. In the meantime a large population of foreign children has been growing to manhood and womanhood in sheer illiteracy and ignorance of our ideals and Canadian Civilization, and, in some cases, without a speaking knowledge of either of our official languages. Surely such an alarming situation cannot be paralleled in any self-governing Dominion of this wide Empire. For the protection of us all it must not be allowed to go on, particularly as after the war it will get steadily and hopelessly worse. A remedy must be found at once by which they will not only be given school rights but will be required to attend.

Your Committee was not the first to find out that the matter of school attendance in this province presented serious problems. About ten years ago the Roman Catholic School Board of Montreal saw the serious-

ness of the situation and on the motion of one of the aldermen expressed itself in favour of some change in the law to bring the children into school.

And in the report for 1907-08 of the Roman Catholic School Commission, we read as follows: "School attendance has improved very considerably of late, but there remains much to be accomplished in this respect in order to insure to all children of Montreal, and we are deeply interested in the welfare of all—the full benefits of a course of primary instruction. I would be glad if my appeal could reach all those who, by their profession or social position, could contribute to increase our school attendance, and make it more regular."

"For this purpose it would be very desirable to see established, outside of all party spirit, a "School Absentee League". The authorities, civil and religious, landlords and captains of industry, employers of labour and working-men should all unite, in common action, with a view to influencing careless parents to fulfil this primordial duty towards their children. Teachers of all grades, male and female, would become, ipso facto, active members and assistants of these "Absentee Leagues", promoting the good work both in school and out of it."

Some people profess to think that an attendance law really fails to produce results. Comparisons already made in this report ought to be convincing; however it may not be amiss to deal somewhat further with this point.

Alberta increased its attendance figures by 48 percent in two years, and Saskatchewan its enrolment by 10,000 in one year, by effective school attendance measures.

To show the effect of an attendance law in increasing attendance one would need to compare the attendance in some province or state before such a law went into force with the attendance afterwards. Besides, the population would need to be fairly stable. Such a situation has offered itself to us in Alberta. At the beginning of the war Alberta had no such law in force, and during the war the population has been fairly stable, there being practically no immigration. Mr. Boyle, the Ex-superintendent of Education for Alberta, assured your Committee that, as a result of this act and other supplementary measures providing "or the keeping open of the schools longer each year, Alberta increased its Aggregate Attendance from 3,403,422 days to 5,037,411 days within a period of two years following the passing of the School Attendance Law, an increase of 48 p.c.

The Registrar of the Department of Education for the Province of Saskatchewan stated in a recent letter, "The statistics for 1917" (the first year of enforcement of

their School Attendance Law), "have just been compiled and I am pleased to state that the enrolment in the Elementary Schools in Saskatchewan WAS INCREASED BY OVER TEN THOUSAND and that the percentage of attendance which, in 1916, was 55, was increased to 62.4 p.c. We are hoping for better attendance in 1918, though the shortage of labour has made heavy demands upon our schools."

It is possible of course to point to cases where the attendance law has not been all that it was expected to be. France has local school attendance committees and they have not been found satisfactory; we believe a Parliamentary Committee has reported asking for their abolition and the substitution of other means of enforcement. It is always difficult to get neighbours to put into force such a law against their neighbours when there is no supervision. But France has never proposed the repeal of its attendance law. The same is true of the province of New Brunswick. There they have local option in the matter and can adopt a compulsory bylaw or not. The Superintendent of Education for New Brunswick admits that in certain localities this fact has made the law of little avail even where it has been adopted. And some parts of that province have not yet adopted it. But Alberta has a most satisfactory attendance law, and Alberta has shown us what such a law can do. Mr. Boyle assured us that the people offered no objection to the law; the few people whom they have had to prosecute received no sympathy.

A survey of the school attendance situation in this province would not be complete without mentioning the fact that five schools already have compulsory attendance regulations. Many will be surprised to learn this. These schools are five Indian Schools, under the direct supervision of the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. The Agent for this reservation put into force a local regulation making education compulsory from seven to fourteen. Before this was done their children did not attend regularly, not 20 p.c. of the children being in school. According to the latest information, for 1916-17, every child (7-14 years) on the reserve attended school and the average attendance was 92.3 p.c. Your Committee is informed that "the regulation is working far better than was anticipated and every one is delighted. The children are more attentive and more tidy and obedient". No doubt it is but right that the Indians being the aboriginal settlers, should be the first people in Quebec to receive the benefits of such a regulation.

Your Committee has no desire to reflect unnecessarily upon the Educational work of this Province. It has nothing but praise



for the generous support which has been given to the Educational interests of the Province during the past twenty years. These facts and figures have been marshalled in order to bring under the notice of those interested and influential in our school matters, unmistakable evidence that there are large numbers of children of school age in this Province who are not availing themselves of the school privileges provided under existing laws and regulations. Your Committee has also endeavored to show that there are thousands who leave school at such an early age that the education received soon fades away and fails to be of any practical value. The result is that we are allowing thousands of our young people to grow up in our midst with little or no educational equipment for the battle of life. Your Committee feels that these vital facts, affecting the earning power, the health and happiness, the moral and spiritual well-being of the community, demand immediate consideration. As the legislation in sister provinces in reference to school attendance improves, the failure of the voluntary system of our own Province becomes more and more apparent. Your Committee believes that a proper attendance law is required in Quebec in order to render effective for the whole population the splendid educational advantages now provided under the laws of this Province; and that such a law would form the coping stone of Quebec's Educational system without any dislocation of the foundations and walls so well laid in the past.

#### DESIRABLE FEATURES OF A SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACT.

Several months ago your Committee gave to the public, in both an English and a French version, a manifesto setting forth our position as advocates of reform, and asking for the cooperation along such lines of all who had the cause of education at heart. From this we will quote certain parts.

"Our task was to work out a scheme that would fit, not with a theory, but with a situation, and one that has a long history. Under the British North America Act, section 93, education was made a matter entirely within the care and supervision of the provincial legislatures, and the religious minorities of Ontario and Quebec were therein granted the right of separate schools, to be supported by local taxation." Many people do not realize that Ontario has not a single school system. By Confederation the two Provinces were granted substantially the same rights. In the meantime Quebec has developed for herself a dual system of administration throughout, so that today the wishes of the Protestant minority are carried out by the Protestant Committee; but in Ontario there is not the same duality of administration, but both Roman Catholic

and Protestant schools are administered by one Department of Education at Toronto. Under such a system of partial duality there is a greater possibility of conflict of administrative ideals and purposes between the central Department and the local authorities, particularly those local authorities of the minority, than there is in the Province of Quebec.

"Since Confederation there has been no demand for a change in this matter; the different provinces regard their educational autonomy as of the highest importance. Hon. C. F. Delage, our Superintendent of Public Instruction, emphasized this point very forcibly at Ottawa in 1917 at the meeting of the Dominion Education Association (pp. 55-58 of report). Sir Lomer Gouin emphasized the same matter in 1911 when replying to Sir Robert Borden's appeal to the provincial Premiers on behalf of the Technical Education Commission. So long as the provincial education systems are working in conformity with the wishes of the people in the provinces concerned, or are capable of being reformed from within, there can be made out no real case for a change from the present system of autonomy in education. We know the provinces are very jealous of their autonomy. Such a change, if it ever did come, would have to come from the British Parliament as an amendment to the British North America Act, and the British Parliament would hardly be so unwise as to try to force such a change on an unwilling Quebec, which was promised its own educational system as a condition of entering Confederation, particularly when the Provincial Government is trying to reform its educational system to meet the needs and demands of its own people."

Moreover these provinces are not the only parts of the world that make use of a dual system to settle the difficulties of religious teaching. "In England itself there is no uniform system. Before 1902 there were board schools controlled by popularly elected school boards and voluntary schools controlled by religious bodies. The act of 1902 tended to unify the system by bringing all these schools under the county or borough councils, but the character of the religious teaching was not changed". Belgium had much the same dual system in her communal schools and her adopted, adoptable and private schools. The former were the public schools of the communes, the latter were all religious schools under different degrees of state control. In the communal schools if one parent demanded no religious instruction the whole school had to become neutral and not even Christian morality could be taught, except two half hours per week, outside the regular time table. In the cities practically all the communal schools were neutral, and along side of them were found many adopted or adoptable



schools, where definite religious instruction could be given at any time and correlated with the whole course. In Belgium those who demanded neutral schools were chiefly socialists and free-thinkers. In almost no country where there are distinct differences of religion or language can we find an absolutely uniform system of schools. These differences must be reckoned with, and generally have been within the British Empire. We get the exact opposite of such freedom in the German treatment of the schools of Alsace Lorraine or of Poland.

As a matter of fact in most countries with a federal government, education is a provincial and not a federal matter. In all the states of the U. S. A. education is under state control as it is under provincial control in Canada. In the Act of Union of South Africa it was enacted that, for a period of five years, and thereafter until Parliament should provide otherwise, education other than higher should remain under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Councils. Under the Australian Commonwealth Act education is one of the most important matters reserved to the States. In Switzerland under the Federal Constitution the cantons have complete control and management of their schools. Even Great Britain, which has not a federal system of government, has all along recognized the federal principle in educational matters. There are separate education acts for England, Scotland and Ireland, and they are administered by different education departments; in 1906, as part of a larger measure, a proposal was made to erect an Education Council for Wales.

There was a time indeed, when as we look back, it seems as if the two Provinces of Ontario and Quebec might have tried the experiment of a homogeneous school system, or what might then truly have been called national schools. We refer to the time when the two Provinces were governed by the Union Parliament from 1841 to 1867. Then if ever, when the school system was being formed, and when federalism was not fully recognized, it might have been possible to have unified the school systems. But the political leaders of that day realized that a unified system would not work in the two provinces with their important differences of language and religion. Even under the Act of Union it was recognized that education was properly a provincial or local matter. Upper Canada received one education law and Lower Canada another; Dr. Ryerson was appointed Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada and Dr. Meillon for Lower Canada, to be succeeded by Hon. Mr. Chauveau.

To ask the Provincial Government in Quebec, as some would do, to change our school system to a neutral one and banish all religious instruction entirely, seems to your

Committee not merely to run counter to the obvious wishes of the great majority of the people of this province, whether Protestants or Catholics, but to be the one thing which our Government cannot do. The British North America Act distinctly states that separate schools, as in use before Confederation, cannot be abolished by the Provincial Governments of Ontario and Quebec. If an attempt were to be made in the future by any radical Frère-Orban at the head of a Quebec Government to do this, it would be strictly ultra vires and unconstitutional.

The debates in 1912 in the Legislative Assembly on the Finnie Bill showed that it would hardly be possible to get a one-sided scheme of compulsion for Protestants alone. Great credit is due to Dr. Finnie for forcing the matter to the front then, and your Committee deplures the fact that this Association gave the movement so little practical help. But any one-sided scheme with penal clauses operating against one class only really got its quietus at that time from the speech of the Prime Minister. We quote parts of it from the files of the Montreal Gazette of Nov. 28th, 1912, "But a penal law should be applied to all alike, though this bill requires us to make a distinction, and I ask the question whether in any country of the world this is done. If we adopt it, we punish those who are not Catholics and we let those go free from censure who are Catholics. . . . It was exactly because it did not concern the general public that the bill was defective, and the only way it could be made a just law would be to have it apply to the entire province in the same manner. The members of the House could not be regarded as serious men if they adopted a law penalizing a certain class of fathers of families. The only proper method would be to penalize as fathers, not as Protestant fathers, as was proposed by the bill."

Your Committee is of the opinion that the arguments advanced by the Prime Minister against a one-sided scheme would apply with equal force to any local option scheme such as they have in New Brunswick, where local school boards may put the attendance by-law into force or not. This too would, in many cases, be penal legislation against a class of the very kind so much deprecated by the Prime Minister; some school commissioners would put it into force while the school trustees would not. It would then be possible to evade the law by changing one's religious faith. Or again it would be possible to evade such a law by moving from one school district to another or by sending children to work in a district without compulsion. And in many cases school municipalities are not coterminous for school commissioners and trustees. Local option implies local attendance officers; but these have always prov-

ed unsatisfactory when there is no supervision. It is the general opinion of those who administer local option attendance laws that this optional feature is most unsatisfactory. Such is the opinion of Mr. Carter, Superintendent of Education for New Brunswick. Moreover the schools that need compulsion most, might entirely evade it on financial grounds. A law which allows any municipality, solely because of its desire to keep down taxes, to evade its responsibility to the children, would be most unsatisfactory. There are some few delinquent school boards in Quebec that are sheltered by the voluntary system; these would be sheltered by an option clause and would be the last to adopt it. Compulsion needs to be brought to bear against such as well as against their children.

In any school attendance act we recommend that the administration of the law and the control of the School Census be functions of a Central Bureau of School Attendance, under the Supervision of the Superintendent.

Your Committee recommends that the compulsory ages be from the seventh to the fourteenth birthdays. At the age of 7 most of the children are in school. And before 14 the ordinary child cannot judge of his life's work or appreciate the value of an education. To set the upper limit lower would be to spoil any law. When other provinces have set their upper limit at 16 and some are planning to do so, it would be useless to set a lower limit than 14.

Your Committee recommends that children within these ages be granted exemption from attending some public school for the following reasons only:

- (a). child in attendance at approved private school.
- (b). child detained by illness.
- (c). child excused by Principal, J. P., or Magistrate for certain specified causes.
- (d). no school of same religious faith within 2 miles, if child is under 10, or 3 miles if child is over 10. This distance limit not to apply in case of consolidated schools.
- (e). child has completed the Public School Course.
- (f). child over 13 who can show to satisfaction of School Board that necessity requires him to do remunerative work, may be granted certificate of exemption by Board under certain conditions regarding health and educational standing.

It would be well if an attendance law contained a clause giving power to the Superintendent, on recommendation of Respective Committees of the Council, to compel any school Board to consolidate its schools, after due notice had been given. Under exemption (c) your Committee suggests that all cases of children detained at home in winter by

poverty, should be dealt with. We also suggest that the Principal, J. P., or Magistrate should be empowered to grant exemption in country districts to children over 12 years of age to stay out of school for husbandry purposes for a period not to exceed 25 school days, provided that all other absences be deducted from this period so that the total absences at the end of the period of exemption shall not amount to more than 25 days. The wording of the last part of the clause would tend to make regular the attendance during the early part of the session of all those boys who might want to avail themselves of this opportunity in the spring. All such exemptions, for these and other causes that may be defined by regulation, to be subject to the Approval of the Attendance Bureau.

Any child over 13 who can show to the satisfaction of the School Board that necessity requires him or her to do remunerative work may be granted an employment certificate by the Board, permitting him to be absent from school while actually engaged in some such employment. Before granting such request the Board shall demand a statement from the prospective employer describing the work at which the child will be engaged. In engaging such child the employer shall acknowledge receipt from Board of such employment certificate and engage himself to return such certificate to the Board within five days after the child leaves his employ, under a penalty. The child does not receive the employment certificate at all and does not ask for it till he has secured his job. Supt. Maxwell of New York, speaking in his 1912 report of the causes of truancy, says "one of the most patent is the issuance of employment certificates to boys and girls who have not secured employment. The law requires that they shall be in school unless legally employed; but most young people, and I am sorry to say, some principals and teachers look upon these official documents as licenses to stay away from school and to roam the streets until employment is secured. If perchance one of these delinquents is arrested by an attendance officer, his excuse is that he is looking for work. The excuse is generally accepted by the courts". To avoid this evil several modern laws contain the provision quoted above; we copied it from the Nova Scotia Act of 1915. The U. S. Bureau of Education recommends that the employment certificate should be sent directly to the employer after the child has found employment and that it should be returned to the Board when the child leaves that employer.

Your Committee would also recommend an educational qualification which the child must have reached before he can pass from the jurisdiction of an attendance law at 14.

We recommend that children be kept in school until their 15th. birthday unless they have passed Grade 5 (as in Protestant Schools) or its equivalent, or have done that Grade twice. We also suggest that no exemption to go to work except those for agricultural purposes, be granted children until they have passed their 14th. birthday unless the said children have completed or repeated Grade 4. This educational standard would chiefly affect the children of foreigners and would keep them one year longer in school unless they had passed Grade 5.

It is recommended that mentally deficient children be exempted from this clause, and that special classes for such be provided.

Your Committee recommends that children should be obliged to attend school for the whole period the schools are open per year, and that the schools in no case be open for less than 140 days. This provision for attendance during the whole school year is found in most modern laws. The latter part of this clause would soon do away with the 4 months' schools that are a standing disgrace to not a few Protestant School Boards. Moreover we suggest a modification in the manner of payment of the provincial grant so that each child who makes less than 140 days attendance per year (excepting children transferred from one Board to another within the year) should cause a financial loss to the school he attends. Such a proviso has worked wonderfully well in keeping attendance regular in England. It incites the Board and the teachers to use every means possible to prevent children from being absent.

Any School Board shall have power to prescribe two or more dates in each school year as dates for terminating school attendance for children in their district. For the purposes of this section, a child shall be deemed to have attained his 14th birthday on the prescribed date next succeeding the 14th anniversary of his birth. This provision, copied from the Scottish Education Act of 1908, is intended to prevent children leaving school, as so many do in Toronto, immediately after reaching their 14th birthday and with no regard to the school curriculum. Under this section, children could be kept in attendance until the end of the term or half year.

It is recommended that all children absent without reasonable excuse for ten days per year, not necessarily consecutive, or three sessions in any one month be classed as habitual truants and as such be subject to the penalties provided. To prevent unnecessary severity we recommend that it be necessary to secure the consent of the principal before prosecuting, provided it is the first offence in any family.

Certain penalties are necessary, to be meted out to those who break such a law. The Schollaert Ministry in Belgium in 1911 tried to frame an attendance law without penalties but it was a miserable failure. But if the other provisions we have mentioned are included in a bill, it would not be necessary to impose heavy penalties or to have recourse to them often. Your Committee would recommend a scale of fines, ranging from \$1.00 to \$10.00, or a penal bond of from \$10.00 to \$25.00, which would be forfeited if the parents failed in keeping their children in school. We further recommend that no fine be imposed but that the parent be bound over to keep the law for a period of two years, in case of the first conviction in any family. Where parents cannot control their children, and they will be few when the fear of the law is added to the parental authority, provision must be made for the education of the child. But such children are apt to come before the court sooner or later anyway. We also recommend the indefinite sentence for all cases of children committed to an institution. This last suggestion is important as the indefinite sentence is not yet recognized by the Juvenile Delinquents Act; it would need to be specially mentioned in an attendance act. In cases of expulsion from school, the committee would provide for the education of the child to the end of the compulsory age at least.

Your Committee recommends that the attendance officers in small towns and country districts should not be local appointees of the School Boards. Experience has shown that neighbours do not like to enforce an attendance law against the children of their neighbours or friends. As local appointees would not need to give full time to such work, their interests would be divided. Experience has shown that in many cases local officers neglect their duties. We are quoting from the reports of U. S. Commission of Education. Nor should the appointment of such officers be left to an outside body such as municipal councillors; they too might forget. These officers should be appointed by some educational authority. Your Committee recommends that in small towns and country districts they be made the appointees of the Provincial Government. It has been a difficult problem for your Committee to decide whether, as in Alberta, the regular school inspectors should be given this duty or not. The system has worked admirably there, we are told by Mr. Boyle, the Ex-Supt. of Education. But Alberta has a single inspectorial system and not a dual one. At any rate the Inspectors must have powers much the same as attendance officers. In order to coordinate the work of looking up absentees from our two sets of schools, it has seemed best to

your Committee to suggest special provincial appointees, probably about one for every two or three counties. These attendance officers must be common to the two systems or else children will escape their notice. In the cities the work of attendance officers is more onerous; your Committee recommends that here the attendance officers be the same as the School Census Officers, to be mentioned later. Moreover by using provincial appointees entirely the chief danger of getting inefficient officers because of poor salaries will be eliminated. These attendance officers must have the same powers as police officers, to enter factories, etc. The ordinary city police would assist. It hardly seems wise to give police or attendance officers the right to arrest children on the streets and take them to gaol or a Police Station; they should have power to detain children and secure information that will enable them to summon the parents, or discretionary powers to escort the children to school. In cases of habitual truancy the officers will prosecute. The procedure of prosecution should be made simple so that it will not be necessary for the teacher to attend the court.

Your Committee recommends that the evidence of the school register be taken in court as prima facie evidence of the absence of a child from school. In most provinces and states teachers swear to the truth of their attendance records. The evidence of the school records should be taken in court as prima facie evidence of the age of the child. The burden of proof both as regards age and absence should rest entirely with the parents.

In any attendance law provision should also be made by which private or church schools should be allowed to continue their work, provided their records of attendance are open to the attendance officers, so that no child could escape the provisions of the law by falsely claiming to attend a private school; and that they be obliged to make the same attendance reports as public schools. The dual system should be recognized here too, and regulations regarding the course of study of such schools should be drawn up by the respective Committees of the Council of Public Instruction.

A strongly worded conscience clause would be necessary in any bill, providing that no Protestant child could be forced to attend a Roman Catholic school or vice versa. In single school areas where children often are voluntarily sent to the school of another faith, nothing in such a law should be taken as compelling such a child to attend for religious teaching, or on holy days. In case of conscientious objection an appeal should lie.

Definite provision must be made in any attendance law for the education of those children who have no school rights now. Their

parents are not tax payers or else they would be obliged to choose to what panel they would pay their school tax. Before 1903 the Jewish tax payers had such an option. Your Committee recommends that such people, being parents of children of school age, should be compelled under penalties to tell the census officer whether they wish their children to attend the Protestant or Roman Catholic School. It was one of the fanes of the Final Bill that all such people would have been classed as Protestants.

Whereas it might entail considerable hardship to put such an attendance act into force at once, your Committee begs to recommend that in country districts and towns it should be put into force on the first day of July following the year in which it is passed. We beg to recommend that it be put in force in cities on the date mentioned above only so far as concerns the children who have not reached their 10th birthday; and that the next July it be enforced up to the 11th birthday, and so on till in 5 years the whole act would be in force. If they were unable to comply with such a plan, we suggest that alternative regulations should be drawn up by the different city Boards and submitted to the respective Committees of the Council of Public Instruction for their approval.

A school census is an integral part of such an attendance act. Your Committee has acted with great satisfaction the very commendable efforts of the Superintendent to get a more exact census and to secure one from the cities where this duty has been neglected in the past. Such a census can be made very exact; in England practically every child is enumerated, the last to be caught being the children of the men who work and live on canal barges.

The Deputy Minister of Education for Manitoba tells us that "the school Board of Winnipeg takes a careful census of children between the ages of five and eighteen years, annually in May. The reports of the census enumerators show the schools the children are alleged to attend. When these reports are in, a staff of clerks checks them carefully with the attendance registers of the schools. If the parent of a child reports the child as attending a certain school and the records do not show this to be the case, an attendance officer takes the matter in hand and gets the facts... We have found this taking of the census and the close checking of it in Winnipeg worth all it costs the board and more. The number of children not at school has been reduced to a minimum, and in nearly all these cases now there are ample grounds for the child's absence. Prior to our first Act looking to the regulation of attendance, Winnipeg was supposed to supply us with certain figures and these were secured usu-



ally from the assessor's office and were far from accurate, as was proved when the first real census was taken. The city of London, England is divided into about twelve districts for the purpose of taking the census. The enumerators go around from house to house and if they find a house closed they keep on visiting the house until they get the information.

In urban centres having a sufficient population (say, 10,000 or more), it is recommended that there be established a local Bureau of School Attendance, responsible to the Central Bureau. The Provincial Government, through the Department of Public Instruction, might appoint the head of this bureau; the combined Protestant Boards and the combined Catholic School Boards of the district served, might appoint each one member. As the expense of such a body was not contemplated when the present provisions for the support of education were framed, the government should supplement the grant to the various Boards to meet their share of the expense of such a bureau.

Finally it is urged that an attendance law can be effective only when there are provided in the Act penalties for all, from highest to lowest, who fail to do their duty in its enforcement.

#### ANSWERS TO SOME ARGUMENTS AGAINST AN ATTENDANCE LAW

It has often been argued, and apparently many people have been led to believe that an attendance law would necessarily deprive the parent of the right to control his child. Let us analyse this contention and see what it really involves, according to the scheme we have outlined. Our plan allows great freedom to the parent in the choice of schools. Practically all over the country we find Catholic and Protestant Schools in the same municipality; we have also given the greatest possible freedom to private schools to go on with their work. A law which gives so much freedom in the choice of schools can not mean obligatory schools, as it might mean in France where so many private schools have been closed. This boasted right of the parent resolves itself under our scheme into the supposed right of the parent to refuse an education to his child altogether. The answer to such an annihilistic principle has been so well given by Mr. Northrup, the former Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Education, that we quote it from the publications of the United States Bureau of Education. "It interferes with the liberty of parents. I reply, it ought to, when they are incapacitated by vice or other causes for the performance of essential duties as parents. Many other laws limit personal liberty... If the law may pro-

hibit the owner from practising cruelty upon his horse or ox, it may restrict the parent from dwarfing the mind and debasing the character of his child. If the state may imprison and punish juvenile criminals, it may remove the causes of their crime and its consequences of loss, injury and shame. The child has rights which not even a parent may violate. He may not rob his child of the sacred right of a good education. The law would justly punish a parent for starving his child, and more mischief is done by starving the mind than by famishing the body. The right of a parent to his children is founded on his ability and disposition to supply their wants of body and mind. When a parent is disqualified by intemperance, cruelty, or insanity, society justly assumes the control of the children. In ancient Greece the law gave unlimited authority to the father over his offspring. The same is true in some barbarous nations now. In all Christian lands the rights of the parents are held to imply certain correlative duties, and the duty to educate is as positive as the duty to feed and clothe. Neglected children, when not orphans in fact, are virtually such, their parents ignoring their duties, and thus forfeiting their rights as parents. The State should protect the helpless, and especially these, its defenceless wards, who otherwise will be vicious as well as weak."

2. That it is a step towards neutral schools. There is no necessary connection between obligatory attendance and neutral schools. Our scheme is based on the present law. Some of the strongest supporters of the former among Catholics are absolutely opposed to any steps that would result in a system of schools in which religious education was not a part of the course. Among Protestant supporters there is a movement for moral and religious exercises being accorded a greater share of attention than at present. Moreover England and Belgium at least, among countries that have adopted attendance laws, have schools that are supported in whole or in part by state grants, but administered and controlled by religious denominations. There no doubt are some advocates of an attendance law who favour neutral schools. It would seem much wiser for opponents of neutral schools to study with unbiased minds the conditions in Quebec, which can be remedied, and remedied by an attendance law alone, and to ponder carefully the educational and literacy statistics of various lands under such laws. Such a study would determine for them whether the cessation of their opposition to this long delayed reform and their espousal of an attendance law on some such scheme as ours would not remove some of the strongest arguments of the supporters of neutral schools. Moreover the reform is sure to come, and opposition to a moderate measure on the

lines of the present dual system is only going to serve to strengthen the party of the ultra radicals who demand neutral schools.

3. That it arrogates new power to the government. It ought to. So do all hygienic measures and laws for the abatement of nuisances. Ignorance is more harmful than the worst nuisance and more deadly than the worst bodily contagion. The welfare of the whole state is bound up in the education of the children. On what other ground can the state impose a tax on business organizations, bachelors, spinsters to provide education for the children of others? But if the state is, as is everywhere recognized, so concerned, then as Hon. Dr. Cody said at the Toronto Exhibition, "to neglect the child is not only criminal but nationally suicidal." How can any one conscientiously oppose the only means known to the state of fulfilling this fundamental duty to its children?

### CHILD LABOUR LAW

Your Committee was also given the task of studying the child labour law of this Province. We noted with gratification that the principle of compulsion had already been given legislative effect here in a small way; what we are asking for, both in the matter of an attendance law and a better child labour law, is only an extension of a principle that has already been granted. The labour law so far as it affects child labour, was passed only in 1909. It was amended in 1910.

School Attendance and Child Labour Laws are always closely related. An effectively enforced child labour law removes one of the chief incentives for children to leave school; but such a labor law, however perfect, does not solve the matter of attendance. The two must be considered as correlatives. We find they were so considered in Mr. Fisher's Bill in England; when he raised the compulsory age and swept away all exemptions, he had to raise the statutory age for child labour. In many parts of the United States of America the child labour law is administered by the school attendance officers.

Your Committee begs to report that our own Child Labour Law, as contained in R. S. P. Q. 3833-3838, is a most simple enactment and very imperfect indeed. It is not comprehensive enough; it prohibits the employment of children under 14 years of age in industrial establishments only. In the interpretative section the words "industrial establishments" mean practically nothing more than a factory or workshop or any part of either. That is too narrow a restriction; it does not regulate the employment of children, or afford them any protection, in business offices, stores, on carts, in hotels; it absolutely ignores all street occupations in which boys often work for themselves, in such trades as that of newsboys, bootblack or messenger boy.

MR. GUYON, THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS under the Act, admits the imperfections of the Act; in his 1915 report he says that there "ARE STILL IN OUR STREETS AND PUBLIC PLACES... TOO MANY CHILDREN WHOM NO REGULATIONS GOVERN AT PRESENT".

Your Committee believes a more comprehensive law is an immediate necessity and for such an enactment we beg to refer to the law of New Hampshire.

We do not think that the age of 14 is high enough for girls to be allowed to go to work in factories. Mr. Guyon in his 1916 report pleads for an enactment for Quebec to raise the age to 16 for girls, and cites the fact that most of the States of the U.S.A. demand that age.

It is our belief that the age certificate demanded by our child labour law is most unsatisfactory and in most cases is only a mere sham. Such a certificate is not demanded in all cases but is left to the wish of the Inspector. The Inspectors themselves admit that parents and children often falsify these certificates. We believe that the child labour and school attendance laws should work together here and that a regular statement from the school should be demanded in the case of all children at work, and that mere statements signed by the parents should be forever abolished. When the child is first enrolled there is not the same incentive to falsify the age as there is when the child has a chance to go to work.

Our law forbids the employment under 16 years of age of any boy or girl who can not read or write fluently. The intent of that enactment is admirable, to keep children from going to work who have no education, but the standard required is so indefinite as to be nearly useless. The Inspector is not obliged to test the children. The proper place to give such a test is in the school. As the Catholic Inspector-General, Mr. Magnan (page 377 of 1916 report) so well suggests, school certificates should be required of all children under 16 years of age (2 years above the compulsory age) as a preliminary to entering a factory. Your Committee begs to reecho this admirable suggestion, which is law in most countries and states. The ages and the educational standard should correspond with those of the attendance law; a child could go to work after 14 if he had passed Grade 5 or after 15 if he had only passed Grade 4.

We also ask Convention to recommend to the Government that section 3838 of the labour law be rescinded immediately after the war. This section allows the Inspector to grant extended facilities so that for a period of 6 weeks a child can be forced to work 12 hours per day or 72 hours per week.



### FREE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Although the abolition of fees in the public schools is not a necessary accompaniment of compulsory school attendance it is a natural and a desirable one. The province of Quebec recognizes the existence of large families as a public and social benefit, for how otherwise can the bonus paid to the parents of large families be justified? Yet the only province in the Dominion which takes this stand, is the only one which later on penalizes these same parents through a charge of so much per child for its education in the Elementary Schools. Let there be no misunderstanding; it is not for lack of funds that such is the case, for do we not boast that the financial position of the Province of Quebec is one of the best, if not the very best, of all the provinces of Canada? Surely it must be that the inertia of tradition has blinded the eyes of our people to the significance of facts! Is not a child-population whose mental, physical and moral nature has been developed and expanded through education of vastly greater potential value to the state economically, socially and morally than one whose abilities and intelligence are but slightly developed? The germ of free education is already contained in our school law and it has sprouted into a hardy growth in some districts. The law (2745) now states that School Commissioners and Trustees may abolish the monthly fee. School fees have been abolished in the schools of the Catholic and Protestant Boards of Montreal, probably elsewhere as well. But is it not time to sweep the whole system of fees in all Board Schools out of existence and in lieu thereof supplement the grants to districts sufficiently to compensate them in whole or in part for their loss? The supplementary grant might be based "upon a principle which shall take account both of the relative cost of education and the relative wealth or poverty of the district concerned, giving greater aid to those districts in which

per head of population the comparative expenditure for educational purposes is excessive as compared with the valuation". [Wording, page xv of circular 417 from the Dep't (Britain) regarding the Education (Scotland) Act, 1908.]

### PRESENT STATUS OF THE QUESTION IN QUEBEC

Your Committee feels assured that the time of the final adoption of a School Attendance Act is appreciably nearer than it was a year ago. At that time the question had lain practically dormant for a number of years. During the past twelve months a number of widely varying organizations and bodies besides our own have discussed the question; it has been strongly advocated in Parliament, where a very favorable impression was made and where there was much less opposition both on the floor of the House and in the newspapers than was the case at the time of the last discussion of the question in 1912, and that notwithstanding the fact that the reforms advocated were much more sweeping than on the former occasion.

The cause however is far from won. There is need for wide dissemination of information, for much diplomatic advocacy in private and in public by all who are or can be made interested in public education and the well-being of our youth in Quebec.

Respectfully submitted,

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