

# Hurray for school teachers

By FLORENCE WILKINSON  
When I went to school the majority of school teachers was women - especially in the public school grades. As the years went on this became even more of the characteristics of school teachers. Here in Ontario there was a day when women and men had different treatment from the school boards, but not so in the West - or so it was said.

Recently I was in the West. Most of the western communities take seriously the need to save their history, and are writing long histories while some of the people with the oldest memories are still alive. In one of these histories I found the rules for school teachers - no mention of differences according to sex (in the heading, that is). I thought you might get a chuckle out of these rules, so here they are.

## 1913 RULES FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS (Vergland S.D. 2909) Saskatchewan

- You will not marry during the term of your contract.
- You are not to keep company with men.
- You must be home between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless attending your school functions.
- You may not loiter downtown in any of the ice-cream stores.
- You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have the

permission of the chairman of the board.

You may not smoke cigarettes. You may not dress in bright colours.

You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.

You must wear at least two petticoats.

Your dresses must not be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.

To keep the school neat and clean, you must - sweep the floor at least once daily; scrub the floor at least once a week with hot soapy water; clean the blackboards at least once a day; and start the fire at 7 a.m. so the room will be warm by 8 a.m.

I expect that some of you will remember days that resemble those in the set of rules. How would modern school teachers cope with getting the fire lit?

Yet there is something to be said for the change in job description of teachers. How would the teacher in today's school, if that teacher was expected to maintain the school building, begin to keep up with all the changes that have taken place in the world of knowledge. Even in one subject it is hard to keep ahead! For a dedicated teacher in today's Canada there is as much time spent on the job as required in "the good old days" - even though he or she does not have to teach all the subjects to grades one to ten at a salary of \$400.00 a year, as some of the teachers still alive were required to do.

Reading a set of rules such as the above makes me want to stand up and cheer for school teachers - then and now - for the work they do in keeping Canadians alive and well in the area of mind stretching and imagination development. Here's to school teachers. Long may you be cherished!

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