

NEW SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BILL IS PASSED BY LEGISLATURE

Will Not Come Into Force Probably for Another Year and Then by Pro- clamation by Lieutenant- Governor

When the act respecting compulsory school attendance of adolescents becomes law the end of this week this Province will have one of the most advanced educational measures on its statutes of any country in the world, in the opinion of Hon. Dr. Cody, Minister of Education. The bill was given its second reading yesterday in the Legislature after the Minister of Education explained at considerable length the details of the act, and passed through committee and given its third reading last night. The Minister, however, does not expect the provisions of the bill will become operative for some months, at least until after another session of the Legislature. As the act now stands it will be brought into force by proclamation of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Dr. Cody frankly admitted that amendments may be required in the act by another session. The officials of the department had studied every similar act in the world. This measure was equal to them all, and ahead of them in some respects. While much had been heard of the Fisher Bill in England and the Scottish Educational Act, this measure, the Minister said, improves upon them in some ways. With the act incorporated in the laws of the Province he believed it would give the School Boards an opportunity to prepare for the conditions they will have to meet when the measure becomes operative. He, believed, too, that much information will reach the department as a result of the measure being discussed by the various interests in the Province. That being the case amendments may be necessary at the next session before the provisions are brought into force by proclamation. Dr. Cody invited the members to discuss the measure as fully as possible in the limited time yet remaining. When he sat down he was applauded by members on both sides of the House.

Minister Proud of Act.

"I think this act, although it does not go as far as some may wish, is yet one of the very best adolescent compulsory acts in the whole world," declared the Minister with pride during the course of his hour's address.

It had been said that about ninety per cent. of the children do not go beyond the elementary schools, and this argument, Dr. Cody believed, added weight to the contention that the advantages in the elementary schools should be improved. However, after there has been greater concentration provided in the elementary schools, after manual training and domestic science classes have been established, he still believed that no system of education could crowd sufficient training into a course when children leave off at fourteen.

There were three reasons which he cited to bear out this argument. A child between fourteen and eighteen years of age is at a period of life when he requires guidance and control. A child at that age is not capable of choosing intelligently his life work, and there are few instances where the vocations offer satisfactory life work to a child under the age of sixteen years. Sixteen is the age of admittance in professional schools, so there is a sort of "dead end" in a child's life if he stops school at fourteen, and he

does not make the best use of his life. The only remedy for this was to extend the age of compulsory education from fourteen.

Conserving Human Resources.

Dr. Cody declared that when there was so much heard of the conservation of natural resources greater attention should be given to the conservation of the human resources. No State is safe if only some of its social units are educated. It was the masses that should be educated and not just the leaders. The use of the educational funds in the past had not been according to the best economy. The most economical use of the finances would be to follow up and see that the boy or girl is given more education just at the time he or she completes the elementary training.

There was on the statutes an Adolescent School Act. However, only one place in Ontario had come in under it. That was London, and it had since had to drop it. He paid tribute to that city, which, he said, was in the front rank along educational lines in Ontario. The Ryerson Elementary School in London was one of the best and most completely equipped schools on the North American continent.

Expounds New Bill.

Under the proposed act the half-time and full-time educational features between fourteen and eighteen were incorporated in so far as they are applicable to Ontario. Dr. Cody sketched at considerable length the various clauses in the bill, as explained in these columns a few days ago, dealing with them in three broad divisions: (1) fourteen to sixteen, either full or part time; (2) part time sixteen to eighteen; (3) preparations for the special courses. He explained that for part-time courses between fourteen and sixteen a child must aggregate at least four hundred hours each year in school, and that every child between sixteen and eighteen must take part-time education aggregating three hundred and twenty hours a year, unless included in some of the exceptions, as provided in the act.

Dr. Cody expressed the opinion that when the practical work is combined with the theoretical, under the part-time plan, much better results would be secured than ordinarily, and the child will have more interest in the work. The act will make it so that there can be no idleness. A child will either have to be at work or at school.

Explaining the meaning he put upon the term "adequate education," Dr. Cody said he believed there would have to be different types of schools, and he laid great stress on the need of general education. He divided this adequate education into three classes: (1) Classes for continuation of general work; (2) commercial and trade preparatory work classes; (3) commercial and trade extension classes.

Commercial and Technical Schools.

There were many difficulties in the way, including that of securing the right kind of teachers. These were reasons, however, that make it necessary to have the people prepared for the law before it is put into operation. He hoped the Dominion Government would not go back on the Provinces and fail to assist financially in education. However, if it did so, he believed the Province should tackle the problem itself. He expressed the belief that within five or six years there will be commercial and technical high schools established in nearly all the larger urban centres in the Province.

Mr. Allan Studholme of East Hamilton regretted the Minister had left so many loopholes in the bill. He believed that as it now stands there will be room for both the employers and the children to get out of carrying out the prov-