

TEACHERS' BILL IS FUTURE SAFEGUARD

Pension and Retirement Fund to Protect Illinois Instructors in Days to Come.

This summary of what the teachers of Illinois are trying to accomplish by the Illinois State Teachers Pension and Retirement Fund Bill is interesting as a clear and condensed statement on a somewhat involved question:

A movement which is likely to make itself felt during the present session of the legislature is that in behalf of a state-wide teachers' pension and retirement fund for the teachers of Illinois. An aggressive group of teachers from the city schools of Freeport and nearby rural schools must be credited with the initial impetus given this movement and they are today receiving the generous support of teachers all over the state. Many boards of education and students of the educational situation in general have endorsed the movement and at the annual meeting of the federated boards of education of Illinois at Urbana in Nov. the delegates present committed the boards they represented strongly to the support of a teachers' retirement fund bill.

The publicity and promotion committee of the Freeport teachers has prepared a bill which with minor modifications has just been introduced into the legislature. The provisions of the bill apply equally to rural teachers and to teachers in city schools, and all teachers are placed upon the same footing regardless of rank or of salary conditions. The fund is to arise from an annual tax of three tenths of one mill upon all the property of the state and from a graduated system of annual payments thereinto made by the teachers themselves.

In favor of some such bill there is an argument from the teacher's standpoint and another from the standpoint of the interested public, and a careful analysis of both arguments shows their substantial agreement. For the public it is maintained that the definite assurance of some provision for the future would tend to attract to the profession more of the best talent and check the constant drift away from the profession of those whose services the state so greatly needs. Then, too, pensions would make possible the retirement of the aged and disabled without hardship, and so promote the dignity and general efficiency of the corps. They would tend to eliminate the great abuse so common now of having inexperienced teachers in the rural schools, as teachers would be more willing to remain there if the service could be credited toward a pension, the same as in a city. For the teacher it is claimed that pensions are merely a part of an adequate compensation and that they relieve the teacher's mind from the fear of an old age of poverty and dependence. They tend to enable teachers to live in a manner to some extent becoming

their extremely important and useful profession, to spend more money for books, for additional professional training, etc. It is seen by these arguments that the interests of the public are to be as well served as those of the teacher by the action proposed.

An inquiry as to what has been done in other states and in foreign countries shows that there is abundant precedent for Illinois adopting the proposed legislation. (1) Ten European nations pay annuities to teachers. (2) Eleven of our sister states have state-wide teachers' retirement systems. (3) Twenty of the largest cities of the U. S. having more than one ninth of our population and employing one-twelfth of our entire force of public school teachers, support teachers' retirement laws of various types, created and regulated by state enactment. It is argued that the teachers of smaller cities, towns, villages and rural districts should have the same protection. That is the purpose of the proposed teachers' pension and retirement fund bill.

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