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HOME AND SCHOOL

VOL. VII, No. 1

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

OCTOBER, 1954

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REUBEN RESIN

The Jail

You Say!

I have before me an article in which the author expresses alarm at the increase in juvenile delinquency, and suggests three ways to remedy, or at least improve, the situation.

One is to censor comic books, movies and television, which, he says, are purveying violence and lust to a vicious and intolerable degree. Another is to augment the disciplinary power of the schools. Because we in Home and School are doing something about the first both on a provincial and national level, and space forbids a discussion of the second, although its worthiness cannot be disregarded, we shall by-pass them for the time being.

Of particular interest is the third suggestion, to increase parental responsibility by making parents liable to punishment and fines for crimes committed by their children. I'll bet dollars to bottle caps (pop bottles, that is) you were jolted by that one, as I was.

As a citizen who wants to live in peace and have my rights respected as I would respect those of others, I could be forgiven if the idea appeals to me. The reasoning might be that if I am robbed, assaulted or otherwise outraged by some young hoodlum I should be able to point a finger at the parents and say, "This has happened because you have not done your job". What is more, I contemplate with pleasure the chances of a certain neighbour of mine avoiding durance vile. He has eight children. What juicy odds!

As a lawyer I am startled. This is something new—to me at any rate—and really drastic. Under our legal system the father, and after his death, the mother, is civilly responsible, in certain cases and under certain conditions, for the damages caused by their minor children. There is no question of criminal responsibility of parents which could result in fines or a jail term. As you probably know, you can insure yourself against civil responsibility, but as for jail, when you've got to go, you've simply got to go.

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**These Federation
Committees can help you
in planning your
Association activities.**

Ask them!

Art Classes: Mrs. G. Lerner, 582
Cote St. Antoine Road, West-
mount.

Children's Leisure Reading:
Miss Rita Sheppard, Verdun
High School, Argyle Avenue,
Verdun.

Constitution: Dr. Edward C.
Powell, 340 - 44th Avenue, La-
chine.

Parent Education: Mrs. R. D. H.
Heard, 4102 Marlowe Avenue,
Montreal.

Mental Health: Mrs. O. Doob,
4645 Sherbrooke W., West-
mount.

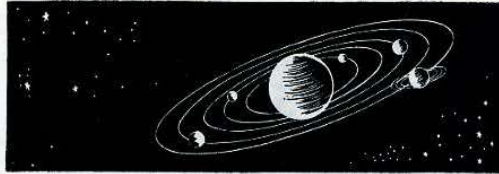
Program Planning: Mrs. P. J.
Dow, 4594 Melrose Avenue,
Montreal.

Publications: Mrs. H. E. Wright,
4836 Madison Avenue, Mont-
real.

Recreational Activities: Mrs.
H. R. Scott, 3560 University St.,
Montreal.

School Education: Dr. Harold E.
Grant, 4266 Hampton Avenue,
Montreal.

Teacher Recruitment: Edwin
G. Drake, 1200 Crevier St.,
Saint-Laurent.



Primitive man worshipped the
Sun God, for instinctively
he knew that without the sun
there could be no life . . .

And so he lived, obsessed by
nameless and elusive fears
spawned out of the darkness,
until each bright dawning when
the ominous shadows were
once again dispelled . . .

Modern man, too, is troubled by
forebodings stemming from the
obscurities and uncertainties
of these complex times . . .

As in olden day, man's profoundest
fear is the lack of security . . .
not for himself alone, but more
particularly for those who look to
him for shelter and protection . . .

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SUN LIFE OF CANADA

**A new
Home-and-School-er
confesses**

THIS I WAS GLAD TO LEARN

*And if you have wondered a bit, too, about
the Home and School movement, this is for you!*

Confession is said to be good for the soul — so here goes. I joined the Home and School Association when my eldest entered kindergarten knowing as little about it as he did about school. Perhaps I even had a little of his apprehension!

Confusion confounded

After two or three meetings I was lost. There was talk of something called "Federation" — there was mention made of "Federation Committees" — somebody or other was our delegate to a body called "The Council of Representatives" — there was even a vague reference once to "our National body".

I was all for dropping quietly out of the whole thing when one day I was fortunate enough to be at a tea where I met an Officer of Quebec Federation. I certainly plied her with questions and although this isn't the order in which they went I've sorted them out so as to give you (if you could possibly be as ignorant of how this marvellous Movement functions as I was) a better idea of what it is all about.

Here is the set-up

The grass roots of the H-S movement is the local Association — one to each school where it is desired. There are now 135 Associations in the Province of Quebec representing approximately 19,000 family memberships. The wonderful thing about it is that a member needn't have children in the school nor be a teacher — just be enough of a good citizen to be interested in children and subscribe to the aims and objects of the Movement. I even heard of one association whose secretary has held that job for 15 years and she never has had chick nor child nor been a teacher!

Because local associations in an area are most likely to have the same problems and situations to face, and in order to make for closer ties between local associations, the next step in the organization is the Regional Council. Each association in a region has representation on its Regional Council. These Councils are fairly new and like everything

in that category are still finding their way a little.

Next plane in the Movement is occupied by the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations. This is the Provincial body which tries to deal with issues and problems of a province-wide nature and also serve as a clearing house for the local associations and regional councils. Actually, the Council of Representatives is the Quebec Federation — or more simply, Federation, as it is generally called. The annual meeting of the Council of Representatives takes the form of an Annual Conference, the 10th of which was held last April 30th and May 1st at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal. Any home-and-school-er may attend this Conference, by the way, but, of course, only the 3 official Representatives of each local association are entitled to debate and to vote on matters of business.

Finally, and logically, there is a national body made up of all ten provincial federations. Because the British Columbia organization uses the more common "parent-teacher" nomenclature (this is used in Great Britain, the United States, and in other countries) our national body is called the Canadian Home and School & Parent Teacher Federation, Inc. Incidentally, we have the closest and friendliest of relationships with the PTA organization in the United States.

How about these committees?

Again starting at the local level there, naturally, are committees handling, or studying, different matters of interest to home-and-school-ers. These committees can secure help, and in many cases, guidance, from similar committees set up by Quebec Federation. Still farther along the line, Canadian Federation has similar committees gathering ideas and so on from all the provincial committees, pooling this information and making it available to all those interested.

Everything starts with the local association and in time is funneled back to the so-called grass roots.

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What about fees?

The H-S movement is, of course, a non-profit organization run for the large part by voluntary help. Some provincial federations have a little part-time, paid assistance and the Canadian Federation has a full-time, paid executive secretary. The national body has only this year acquired permanent headquarters, a step which had been lauded by all who know the need for such a building.

Twenty cents out of every local membership fee leaves the local association — fourteen cents going to the provincial Federation and six cents to the national Federation. The remainder of all fees stays with the local group. Usually the Regional Councils have a nominal, flat fee for the local associations, normally graded by size of local membership on the order of one, three and five dollars. All these fees are used for the operational expenses of the various bodies, such expenses generally being in connection with the paper work necessary to keep communications flowing.

How are Federation's officers elected?

The election of Federation's officers takes place at the annual meeting (the Annual Conference held each spring) with the Representatives of the local associations voting. There is a Nominating Committee charged with what, in any voluntary organization, is the difficult task of persuading members to serve as officers. Usually Federation officers are those who have performed similar tasks at the local level and more and more they are further qualified by having served on Regional Councils.

Similarly, most of Canadian Federation's officers have held provincial posts so that once again it is a case of things starting at the heart of the Movement — the local association — and progressing along the line of organization.

And now do you feel better?

Of course, I learned a great deal more from this very warm-hearted and efficient Federation officer but the foregoing were some of the fundamental points I hadn't understood before. I hope this little confession of mine helps you to a better understanding and greater appreciation of what makes this great voluntary Movement of ours tick so energetically and so well.

Are You Listening

to HOME AND SCHOOL
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STUDENTS

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B. AUDET

THE JAIL YOU SAY, *cont'd*

It is as a parent, however, that I am really disturbed. Just consider a spell. You and I go along believing ourselves to be law-abiding citizens and, wham! we are solicitously being asked how we like our stripes, black on white, or vice versa. We may well be disturbed, whether or not such a law is imminent, for this proposal was made in all seriousness by an authoritative and respected commentator of the human scene. The point of all this is that many of us are accused of not assuming our responsibilities as parents and, it is suggested, we will not unless compelled to do so. What would be your answer to the question, "Are you satisfied that you have done all you can, by teaching and by example, to make a good citizen of your child, to the extent that you do not fear the consequences of a law holding you criminally responsible for his lapses"?

One of the most important activities of Home and School is parent education. This program is designed to assist parents in cooperation with the school, in the training of our children—to try to make them happy, help them achieve their ambitions and fit them to live a democratic society.

Our Parent Education Committee is at the service of all associations and loves to work. Call upon it, won't you? And it has the cleverest people. Just look at some of the things they taught me about parent-child relationships:

Being sure of yourself need not mean that you're smug;

Being reasonable does not mean that you're weak;

Refusing to admit error does not mean that you're strong;

Being firm does not mean that you're cruel;

Being over-indulgent does not mean that you're kind;

Being respected should not mean that you're feared;

Being concerned does not mean doting;

Being interested does not mean that you're prying;

Deploring rudeness does not mean that you're not modern;

Insisting on honesty, integrity and the practise of the golden rule, does not mean that you're stuffy or old-fashioned;

Above all, having a sense of humour does not mean that you're frivolous.

All this and more they taught me. But to tell all I know would need at least another paragraph—and the editor says no.

REUBEN RESIN.



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THE SUBJECT IS NOT FUNNY!

"Seduction Of The Innocent" by Fredric Wertham, M.D., Clarke, Irwin, 397 pages, \$4.00

A Review by Harriet Hill, reprinted from The Gazette of April 24, 1954.

Parents who regard comic books as a necessary evil ("They keep the children quiet") will receive a severe jolt from Dr. Fredric Wertham's considered, well-documented and hair-raising indictment. He has discarded the detached view of the scientist and rips apart the purveyors of comic books and the adults who tolerate them. Comic books, he shows, are completely destructive to the plastic minds of the young. They seduce the innocent.

No haphazard indictment, Dr. Wertham, who as senior psychiatrist for the Department of Hospitals in New York has directed mental hygiene clinics and was in charge of the Court of General Sessions Psychiatric Clinic, gives chapter and verse. For instance he tells of a boy who burglarized a store who told him, "I read the comic books to learn how you can get money.

I read about 30 a week. I know some other boys who learned how to do such jobs from comic books." From a 14-year-old delinquent girl he heard: "In some of the crime comic books kids pick up ideas. They give them ideas of robbery and sex. They show you men beating up girls and breaking their arms. The fellows see that and they want to try it . . . I know of fellows who do imitate comic books."

Such quotations, and there are many, cannot be read with complacency, nor passed off with the comfortable idea that comic books harm only children who are inclined towards delinquency.

But perhaps more damning than the cases of children committing crimes after being stimulated by comic books is the general all-over reaction which Dr. Wertham claims comic books inspire. Among his charges are — comic books glorify cruelty (and incidentally the book includes reprints of several comics that are ghastly representations of a man being hanged, a girl being attacked with a red hot poker and a man about to thrust a needle in a girl's eye); they deal in sadism, they stimulate sexual perversion, they are an invitation to illiteracy.

Parents are culpable, he says, because they have failed to investigate the poison their children are reading and because as a whole they have not taken action to ban comic books.

Canada's position, fortunately, is better than the United States. Dr. Wertham praises the action of the Canadian Government in banning 25 disreputable comic books from Canadian newsstands. He tells how when the bill came before the Senate, after being passed unanimously by the House of Commons, it was referred to one of the standing committees. At the committee hearings two representatives of the comic book trade gave evidence and held that far from having an adverse influence crime comic books are highly moral and have a very good influence on children. Some members of the Senate were swayed until the representatives passed around some free samples of comic books.

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**"Refresh
yourself"**



Ernest W. Crowe

suggests

Our Dollars Ought To Make Sense

DO you believe that school fees for grades in the compulsory category should be eliminated? Do you feel that Protestant and Roman Catholic school boards should share proportionately in taxes derived from all revenue-producing property — in other words, all real estate, other than owner-occupied single dwellings or farms and the land on which they stand?

Do you believe that every adult should have a vote in the election of school board members?

At the 7th Annual Provincial Conference our Federation passed the four resolutions which appear on the following page — but only after our School Finance Committee had studied "the present methods of financing education" in our Province and had reported to the member Associations well in advance of the Conference. Our Committee was comprised of Dr. Laurence P. Patterson (Westmount High), G. P. Hawke (Farnham), F. W. Price (Willingdon), Norman W. Wood (Baron Byng High), S. M. Gossage (Hudson), L. M. Clark (West Hill), Malcolm Dunsmore (Granby) and myself (Montreal West) as Chairman.

Let's Consider Real Estate Taxes

AS you can imagine, a century ago nearly all school revenue came from municipal taxation of real estate but today that isn't so. The view has been expressed that the upper limit of real estate taxation is being approached. Certainly over the whole Province it isn't meeting school costs as it originally did. For example, in the year 1952-53 only 77.5% of the Greater Montreal budget was covered by real estate taxes. For the rest of the Province it approximates 50%.

Of course there are advantages to the real estate tax. It is easily collectable. Because the tax rate can be fixed by the school board next year's revenue can be forecast with reasonable accuracy. The taxpayer knows just what he is paying the tax for and, accordingly, local interest in a tax spent locally is generally created. Furthermore, it is relatively stable.

There are, however, certain disadvantages. Provincial grants-in-aid are based at least in part on total assessed value or average assessed value per child in the school community — and unless there is relative accuracy as to the assessed value of properties in relation to real value the tax lacks equity

as between different communities. Real estate is no longer a fair index of individual capital wealth over a community since movable property — such as cars, refrigerators and other household "plant" — has now assumed greater importance. The real estate tax places tenants in an anomalous position. Directly, they pay no real estate tax, and, because of this, have been given no responsibility or opportunity to vote or serve in school board offices. Actually a portion or, in many cases, all of the taxes (both municipal and school taxes) are passed on to and paid by the

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With the consent of the Resolutions Committee the School Finance Committee placed the following resolutions before the Council of Representatives at the 7th Annual Provincial Conference, held in Montreal April 30 and May 1, 1954. All were carried unanimously following interesting debates.

- (1) Resolved that school fees for grades in the compulsory category should be eliminated.
- (2) Resolved that the Quebec Association of Protestant School Boards be requested by the Quebec Federation to consider the preparation of a standard form of annual statement (financial and statistical) for the use of School Boards so that, working with the Department of Education, an informative annual compilation of such data could be available to responsible bodies endeavouring to fully understand our Provincial school financial problems and methods.
- (3) Resolved that all revenue-producing property (namely, all real estate, other than owner-occupied single dwellings or farms and the land on which they stand) should be included in the Neutral Panel with proportionate distribution to the Roman Catholic and Protestant School Boards based on the number of pupils in regular attendance.
- (4) Resolved that Quebec Federation would support the introduction of the universal adult franchise in the voting election of School Board members.

tenant through rental charges. This is felt to be not only undemocratic but unhealthy inasmuch as school boards need the interest, support, assistance and direction of all responsible elements of the community.

These anomalies are further increased when it is remembered that an increasing proportion of school revenues is being raised by means other than the real estate tax since most of the other modes of taxing apply generally over the public at large (e.g., sales tax or income tax). One further effect of the property requirement for board membership is to reduce the opportunity for such public service by the women of the Province.

Finally, corporations are taxed in a "Neutral Panel" at the rate of the majority system except in Montreal where a special rate is used. The Neutral Panel taxes are split proportionately to the number of children of school age in the Protestant and Roman Catholic groups. It is felt that this split should be in proportion to the number of scholars in regular attendance at school. A weakness of the system is that in multiple rented dwellings (e.g., apartments) where an individual (not a corporation) owns the property, it is taxed in the Protestant or Roman Catholic

panel, depending on the religion of such individual. It would be more reasonable, it is believed, to tax such multiple dwellings (and, indeed, all revenue-producing real estate) in the Neutral Panel.

Then Sales Tax and School Fees

ALTHOUGH it is well known that as a secondary source of school revenue school boards are empowered to have a 1% municipal sales tax collected for educational purposes in the municipal area, it is not so well known that there are factors in connection with the net possible return which have deterred many smaller communities from applying it.

School fees provide the only other source of revenue directly controllable by a school board. Those collected in Greater Montreal

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A. LESLIE PERRY

ARCHITECT

MONTREAL

Introducing
a brand new
feature

Rough Notes

by Al. Rough

Please send your notes to the Editor — and please sign your name to them

Conference Comments: Saturday afternoon's session again was one of the most popular . . . Some future Federation officer material showed up in the debates on the resolutions — and mighty good material, too! . . . President **Reubin Resin** was his usual, easy-going, ebullient self . . . Registration reported by Conference Arrangements Chairman **Ted Banning** was 320 . . . Montreal Island associations had 112 Representatives on hand but off-the-Island units were pushing that mark with a record attendance of 94 Representatives — a wonderful showing.

People Who Can Talk On Their Feet: **Mrs. George Smith** (Sherbrooke) made a real contribution to the debate on that Association's resolution regarding non-property owners having a voice in school board affairs . . . **Mrs. McLachlan** (Buckingham) also scored on the same subject . . . Still another lady, **Mrs. Wilhemina Holmes** (St. Laurent High), won applause for her logical yet spirited and interesting presentation of that Association's resolution on the need for Family Courts.

Seen Around the Conference **Dr. W. P. Percival**, Federation's Honorary President, was a centre of attraction at the President's Reception . . . It was good to see **Dr. Errol Amaron** (Stanstead) in attendance . . . The same is true of **A. W. Lang**, Secretary, Quebec Association of Protestant School Boards, and many other staunch Home-and-School-ers.

H-S In Action: The Montreal press gave considerable space to the **Van Horne** Association's fight to have a proposed by-law amendment to commercialize the north side of Van Horne Avenue defeated in the City Council . . . **Kensington** Association also received publicity for bike safety this spring when 3 west-end-of-Montreal youngsters made perfect scores in the tests sponsored by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and the West End Traffic Council . . . **Mrs. Paul Jobin**, Chairman of the Traffic Safety Committee of that Association, organized these particular tests.

Here & There: Congratulations are due **Dr. Lawrence P. Patterson** (Westmount High) former Vice-President of Federation upon his election as President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation — a big responsible job . . . **Sutton** Association continues its sponsorship of public speaking contests and reports the "finals" as one of the best drawing cards on its program . . . A 10-year-old essayist of **Guy Drummond School**, writing as a "new Canadian" about what living in Canada means, included this: "My neighbor, Nicole, goes to her church. Mary, my friend, goes to hers, while I go to the synagogue. But we all play together and like each other very much." . . . New York City's school system uses an I.Q. of 130 as the basis of selection which puts about 4½% of the school population into the so-called 'gifted' category. If an I.Q. of 140 were used about one child in 100 would be so classed; if 150 were used then it would be one in 500. The problem of the gifted child has been under study in Montreal by a sub-committee of the School Board's Curriculum Council.

Quotable Quotes: **A. L. Evans**, Superintendent of the Boys' Farm and Training School at Shawbridge, is reported as noting at the annual meeting of that institution, "We cannot help but note the lower standard of parental supervision, the lack of reasonably firm discipline and the shifting moral standards in a changing world . . . I do not think that all parents are entirely to blame for their children's behaviour.

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ASSOCIATION REPORTS ON HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

One of the best attended and most eagerly awaited sessions of the Annual Conference is the second portion of the Saturday afternoon program when selected local Associations report briefly on their "most successful program of the year". This session at the 7th Annual Conference on May 1st was no exception; like its predecessors it amply rewarded the large audience's rapt attention.

For very good reasons some Associations strayed from their assignment and dealt with what they felt were the most interesting or rewarding events or projects of their year. Accordingly, the reports (in some cases edited because of length or inclusion of more than one "highlight") have been arranged in groups.

New and different

Mrs. J. C. Moore, Programme Chairman, **Buckingham**, reported:

At our April meeting we showed a very unusual film entitled, "The Remarkable Incident At Carson Corners". After giving the matter considerable thought, we have decided to list this meeting as our most interesting one of the year. Not only was the film itself quite out of the ordinary but the circumstances under which we obtained it were rather unique.

The program appeared on television from Toronto sometime in January. One of our members suggested that it would be worthwhile to see it if it could ever be made into a film suitable for showing on our 16 mm. projector. After a great deal of correspondence with Toronto and C.B.S. Television in New York, we finally obtained the kinescope for our April meeting. We mention all this because we feel that it may perhaps suggest new avenues of approach to other Associations for obtaining different films.

The picture itself is a "natural" for a Home and School association as it deals with parents, teachers, children and the community at large. It portrays in a really awesome manner a terrible accident which occurred because of neglect or forgetfulness on the part of several people. An understanding of

the situation is finally reached after the circumstances leading up to the tragedy were aired at a group meeting of the children, parents and teachers of the community.

This film was of slightly more than an hour's duration and it spoke for itself so there was no need for organized discussion afterward. But there was much informal discussion during the social hour which always follows our meetings.

Mrs. G. L. Parker, President, **Drummondville**, reported:

Our Association, which was formed eight years ago, had been considering some method of paying tribute to its founders and also to the people who have put forth more than the usual effort. Honorary memberships were considered and a committee was formed to study this and submit a list of names. This committee found that it could not make up such a list because of the risk of omitting people who might feel themselves worthy of such an honor.

At this point our executive came up with the idea of holding a Founders' Night; its purpose to permit tribute to be paid to the founders and also all past executive members and also to review the beginnings of the organization. Records were dug into and also the original correspondence gathering information about the formation of the Association.

At the Founders' Night, which was publicized by radio, newspaper and by personal letters, one of our past presidents made a speech in which he outlined the beginnings of the organization. He read out the names of the first executive and the positions they had held. The names of all subsequent executive members were also read out and honorable mention made of local business men and companies whose generosity made the Association the success we feel it to be today.

A reply to this was made by our first president who outlined some of the outstanding achievements accomplished. The evening's program was completed with a talk by Quebec Federation President Reuben Resin. Ex-

(continued on page 13)

cellent refreshments were served at the end of the evening and Founders' Night voted a decided success.

The Members entertained

Mrs. A. Gordon, **Kensington**, reported:

At our January meeting we presented the playlet, "Fresh Variable Winds", followed by a discussion led by a member of the Parent Education Committee. Although this type of program isn't original, in fact this particular play is probably well known to most of you, we feel that a program of this type is well worth including in your meetings.

As we presented it, the play was acted and produced by parents and scholars of the school, and we found this local talent aroused a great deal of interest beforehand with the children in the cast talking about it among their friends. The rehearsals at the school and the co-operation we received on such occasions were pleasant reminders to us all of how healthy was the Home and School atmosphere in our School.

As far as the actual mechanics of the production went we chose a group of actors who lived fairly close together which is a wise precaution if your school area is large, as rehearsals, in the early stages, do present some difficulties as it isn't always easy to get the children and adults in the cast together. The production was kept as simple as possible; no stage curtains or properties other than choirs, etc. being used. We found that this approach seemed to simplify the discussion period afterwards as there was no theatrical atmosphere to break down.

In our newsletter prior to the meeting we had stressed the importance of the father's part in the play, and so we were gratified by the resultant increased attendance by fathers and their participation in the subsequent discussion period. We found that this play produced more discussion than any talk or film we have shown previously and this fulfilled one of our aims of the year — to encourage greater membership participation.

In case any Association should be considering a similar program we would also suggest they have a follow-up program the next month. We did so and found that this meeting underlined what we had learned and discovered in our best meeting of the year. J. M. Fletcher, President, **Asbestos-Danville-Shipton**, reported:

Five of our 1953-54 programs were based on five of the seven Quebec Federation Aims. Of these we felt our best effort was the

program, "Good Parent-Teacher Conferences".

The two playlets for this program were written by Dr. Powell and material obtained from the April, 1953, issue of *Home and School*. Our Principal directed the plays and the cast and moderator were obtained from among our members.

The "buzz sessions" which followed were very successful, several groups taking part and many viewpoints being presented. As this was a purely local effort, using bonafide Magazine material, we felt it was our outstanding program of the year.

Mrs. B. Silverstein, Secretary, **Bancroft**, reported:

At our February meeting we presented a play called, "The Case of the Missing Handshake" which was directed by one of our teachers. Four teachers and five parents acted as cast and understudies. There were six weeks of intense rehearsals during which there developed a friendly and informal atmosphere which has remained beyond that date.

Following the play we had a discussion period and then held a Penny Fair with all members participating.

For us this effort was a big step forward in the relationship with our teachers and we feel that if this has been the beginning of a closer understanding then our February meeting was truly the highlight of our season. Mrs. L. Drayon, Secretary, **Aberdeen**, reported:

A very successful meeting, we are happy to report, was a playlet presented by the parents of the Association. This playlet was obtained from Federation headquarters and concerned the Parent-Teacher conferences.

They participated

N. K. de St. Croix, past president, **Verdun High**, reported for M. Craig, Program Chairman:

Our most successful program this year dealt with problems. It was actually a series of three meetings and went under the headings, Pupil Problems, Parent Problems, and Teacher Problems.

Each night there was a panel consisting of a school administrator (principal or vice-principal), a teacher, a parent and, on pupil problems night, a boy and a girl student.

Pupil Problems were about allowances, parental interference in choosing careers, bad reports and part time jobs.

(continued on page 19)

Leonard Unsworth

reviews

THE PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS HELD AT WEST HILL HIGH SCHOOL JANUARY, 1954.

Mr. Unsworth is the Principal of West Hill High School.

WHEN the Home and School Executive, through its President, Mr. A. C. Woodward, approached me with regard to parent-teacher interviews after school hours it might well be said that "silence was golden" — not yellow, mind you! Each knew some of the difficulties and pitfalls which might result from hasty, thoughtless action.

The suggestion, briefly, was that the School should plan after-school appointments with parents to discuss the scholastic achievements and attitude of the pupils immediately after the Christmas report has been taken home. By this time, it was felt, teachers and parents would be able to assess whether or not the individual work was satisfactory; whether or not the student's attitude towards school work and extra-curricular activities was properly adjusted; certain weaknesses could be pointed out and certain remedies suggested. Since this method of bringing together class teacher and parent at the high school level was new, little was known about what the response might be from the parents.

The plan finally written out at the Home and School Executive meeting was as follows:

1. The December Home and School meeting would be a panel consisting of Dr. E. C. Powell (former President of Quebec Federation) and Miss Audrey Clark (Guidance Consultant with the School Board) — both interested in the plan and having some knowledge of this type of work at the elementary level. Their job was to convince the parents of the splendid opportunity which was being presented to them to meet with the teacher to discuss — cordially and with mutual trust and understanding — their children's school life — physical, mental and spiritual. They pointed out the approach to the interview, the content which might be discussed (and the manner of so doing), the need for tact and also brevity in such an interview. I am very grateful to the members of the panel for their clear enunciation of the problem. The meeting was unanimously in favour of the scheme.

2. The second phase was for the Principal to meet with his class teachers and explain

the plan, pointing out that this would entail many hours of interview after a hard day's work. Not only would the interviews themselves be time-consuming, but much labour would be necessary beforehand to find out from subject teachers the reasons for poor progress and poor attitude towards a subject. Specialists would have to be consulted, past records from the files would have to be reviewed, etc., in order that a complete background might be presented to the parent for guidance. When I say that the staff meeting, without exception, agreed to the plan — after discussion of a few minor points — I think you will agree that the School is very fortunate to have such a fine group of men and women, willing and earnest to do all in their power to help parents and pupils to a better understanding of the School and its work.

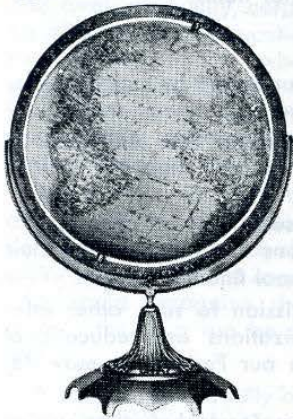
The Plan

A letter was mimeographed to the parent of each pupil suggesting an interview between 3.00 and 4.00 p.m., during the school days of the second week in January. The parent was asked to choose a day and a time most suitable to his or her schedule and to report to the School at the appointed hour. The response was gratifying. Out of a possible 1,050, 568 parents expressed a wish to participate. For various reasons many replied they were unable to attend that week. Some parents felt it was unnecessary to come because they had seen the teacher only recently. A few others expressed the opinion that their child was perfectly happy and so were they. (It should be pointed out that all pupils had to return a reply — either YES or NO.)

It was agreed by the teachers that probably five parents could be interviewed in one afternoon — this was about the average for the teachers. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes. In some cases as many as 28 parents were interviewed by one class teacher, making it necessary to extend the interviews another week. Parents ex-

(continued on page 21)

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OUR DOLLARS, cont'd

last year, however, amounted to only 4% of the total revenue and this is probable a maximum percentages because it relates to a highly concentrated urban school with a higher than average proportion of High School pupils.

Supporters of the school fee method present its advantages as a direct, recognizable fee locally spent and controlled; a reasonably forecastable item in school financing; and only a small proportion of the actual cost of educating the child.

The disadvantages are that the charge bears most heavily on families with a larger number of children attending school. In certain families, and particularly at High School level, the fee may well result in the child leaving school with consequent loss of undeveloped ability. Although school boards have wide discretion to waive fees, any tax method which in effect applies a "means test" is repulsive to most of the population. Since the total amount collected is low in proportion to total revenues required it may be that the time spent by teachers and school staffs in collecting the fee is out of proportion to the amount collected. Besides the foregoing, as a citizen, the parent has already paid his proper share of school costs through the regular taxing channels.

And Certain Other Sources

THERE are other sources of revenue which, since they are grants, are uncontrolled sources insofar as school boards are concerned.

The *Public School Fund* is a grant voted annually by the Legislature. It is divided between the Protestant and Roman Catholic systems in proportion to the number of children in each. A percentage of the salaries of teachers of Grades I to VII is paid to each school municipality, based on the assessed valuation per teacher but subject to adjustment.

The *Superior Education Fund* provides grants for Universities, High Schools, Intermediate and Primary Schools on the recommendation of the Roman Catholic or Protestant Committee of the Council of Education, divided between the two sister systems proportionately to the respective population of the Province according to the then last census.

The *Poor Municipalities Fund* provides grants for rural school municipalities of elementary status under certain conditions.

Building and Repair grants are made to school boards for new buildings in instalments, generally over a period of 5 years,

and also for repairs to existing buildings. Greater Montreal does not participate in these building grants.

In addition there are grants for *Transportation* and other special items.

A Challenge

ALL the foregoing, supported by many figures, tabulations and other data, was studied by the School Finance Committee with a view to making its findings and recommendations available —

- (a) for the purpose of fully informing member associations and encouraging their interest in school finance;
- (b) for the submission to such other interested organizations and educational authorities as our Federation may decide;
- (c) and as a base for such further studies as may be recommended by Federation.

In making our study we accepted several premises.

An education, we felt, adequate for our times and within the individual child's limits of ability and intelligence, should be available with democratic impartiality to all children between the presently accepted age

(continued on page 17)



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limits of compulsory education and should be encouraged beyond such age limits by every reasonable means.

Since each individual, family, municipality and rural community, corporation and industry benefits from the education provided for our children across the whole Province, it is reasonable to visualize that a considerable proportion (if not all) of the total costs of education could logically be borne by a broadly based method of taxation which would not be directed at restricted groups or types of taxpayers, but rather which would derive funds by reasonable taxation of our entire population and corporate organization, and would recognize that the tax burden must in the long run be related to ability to pay.

A public which is fully and clearly informed as to the philosophy and purpose of education, the educational methods used and the amounts expended and collected for educational purposes, must constitute the ultimate safeguard to our educational purposes and our Provincial progress. Our Committee recognized the importance of the work of Quebec Federation in better interpreting to the public

our schools and the educational purposes for which our teachers are striving. The field of interpreting the purpose, mechanics and results of our school financing provides a challenge and an opportunity which your Committee felt should be seized by our Home and School Associations, our School Boards and our Provincial educational authorities.

(Editor's Note: Requests for copies of the "Report of the School Finance Committee — March 25, 1954" will be gladly filled so long as supplies last. Write F. W. Price, Corresponding Secretary, Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, 4589 Wilson Avenue, Montreal 28, P.Q. Why not ask your Program Chairman to include the subject of school finance in his or her plans? The report, itself, will assist any panel of your members in preparing a discussion and your local School Board can help since their problems are your problems.)

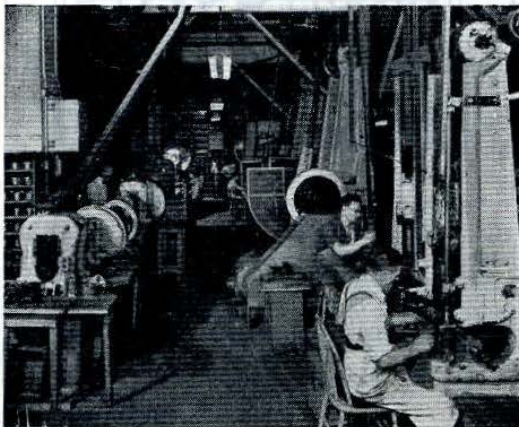
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Your help will be needed in the "Quarters for Headquarters" Campaign.

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NOT FUNNY, cont'd

The senators looked at the comics and were "aghast".

Before 1945, says Dr. Wertham, the crime comic book industry had a monopoly on the brutalization of children. Today it has competition from television and other media. He charges that TV has taken the worst out of the comic books from sadism to superman (which breeds race hatreds, he says) and he adds that the great obstacle to the future of good television for children is comic books.

Dr. Wertham's suggestion to combat what he calls the "moral disarmament" of comic books is the public health approach to legislation on the subject.

He says that "just as we have ordinances against the pollution of water, so now we need ordinances against the pollution of children's minds."

He is well aware that people, even those connected with mental hygiene programs, think he overstates his case and argue that even the fairy tales have an element of sadism. Their arguments fail to impress him after years of dealing with young delinquents in psychiatric clinics.

A frightening book, no parent can read it without feeling uneasy. This is exactly what the author intends for once parents are stirred to action the death kneel of comic books will be sounded.

P.A.P.T. INVITATION

The Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Quebec has extended a most cordial invitation to all home-and-schoolers to attend its 90th Annual Convention to be held Thursday and Friday, October 7th and 8th. Feature events include the followings:

Thursday — 10:45 a.m. at West Hill Assembly Hall — "Children's Literature" — An address by Miss Helen R. Sattley, Director, School Library Service, New York City.

Thursday — 8:15 a.m. at Assembly Hall, High School of Montreal — Dr. W. E. Blatz, Director of the Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto, will discuss progressive education in the light of the "Neatby controversy".

Friday — 10:45 p.m. at West Hill Assembly Hall — Dr. W. P. Percival, Director of Protestant Education, will discuss present and future conditions of Protestant education in Quebec.

"Quarters for Headquarters"

Established 27 years ago, Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation — our national body — has a membership of over 200,000 families and is the largest voluntary organization in Canada. And yet it is only this year that it has acquired — with borrowed money — a national headquarters.

Each association, through its Provincial Federation, has promised to raise the \$39,000 required to repay the borrowed funds. All Provinces except Quebec have their campaigns well under way but ours is planned for January, 1955. Like the others, our Federation has adopted the slogan, "Quarters for Headquarters" and has pledged "a quarter from each member family". Since we have close to 20,000 such members, our objective is \$5,000.

Your local Executive will be deciding shortly how your Association will raise its quota. We ask your wholehearted support of your local fund raising committee.

ISOBEL SHUSTER, *Chairman,*
Headquarters Campaign Committee.

The Home and School Movement's prime object is to promote the welfare of children and youth.

One of our objects is to promote and secure adequate legislation for the care and protection of children and youth.

An H-S objective is to obtain the best for each child according to his physical, mental, social and spiritual needs.



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ASSOCIATION REPORTS, cont'd

Parent Problems dealt with their selection of their children's friends, going steady, teenage chaperoning, time to go to bed, and how to keep children in school to the end of Grade 11.

To add interest to the program a short skit with student participation was presented dealing with the last program.

In the Teacher Problems program homework, examinations and poor work habits were discussed. The panel at this meeting was made up of a minister, a vice-principal and a teacher. In order to bring in student participation in this last gathering four pupils debated "The Home has a greater influence than the School".

Our programs had a different moderator each night and a real effort was made to have the audience ask questions and take part. This aspect went very well and some of the discussions had to be limited. These programs were chosen . . . because comments from the members seemed to indicate that these were things they wanted to hear about at Home and School. They enjoyed seeing the students take part, meeting the administrators and teachers, and having the opportunity to express themselves.

Andrew C. Woodward, President, **West Hill High**, reported:

The theme of our program this past year was "Your School" under the very capable leadership of Mrs. P. J. Dow. The most outstanding item was Parent-Teacher conferences, a subject introduced by a panel, Dr. Edward C. Powell, Miss Audrey Clark, Mr. Harold R. W. Goodwin, Mr. Leonard Unsworth, our principal, and myself. This was followed by an invitation from the School to all parents to come the second week of January to discuss the Christmas report. Over 550 parents took advantage of this opportunity to discuss their children's progress.

(Editor's note: Mr. Unsworth's account of these conferences will be found elsewhere in this issue.)

Axel Eeg, President, **Pointe Claire**, reported:

On the basis of attendance our January, 1954, meeting must certainly be mentioned because of a record 81% turnout. We do feel, however, that we must discuss our February meeting as the season's highlight.

The question for the night was: "What do you expect from your Home and School Association?" A panel of four, representing the School Board, School Staff, Town Council and Parents ably provided many interesting an-

(continued on page 22)

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Many times there are factors outside the home which contribute. We meet many parents and most of them are sincerely interested in the welfare of their children but we are amazed to find how little they know about them".

Help: The Editor reports that certain copies of this magazine are missing from the file and would sincerely appreciate receiving the following for the archives: Vol. I, Nos. 1 to 6 inclusive, also No. 8 and No. 10; Vol. II, No. 5; Vol. III, No. 6 . . . Please don't be shy about sending yours in — even if he receives more than one copy of a certain issue, all will be useful . . . And his thanks to you — and you — and you . . . !

About People Doing Things: **Dr. L. E. Socolow** after doing a wonderful job for this magazine resigned last spring as Chairman of the Editorial Board but he's back again in charge of the toughest job of all — circulation. As someone said, admiringly, "What a man!" We can all make it easier for him by getting our subscriptions in early, however — and by getting at least one other home-and-school-er to subscribe! . . . Another gentleman by the name of **Resin** has appeared in our ranks, this time Federation President Reuben Resin's brother, **M. M. Resin**, as President of Royal Vale Association . . . Our new Editorial Board Chairman, **L. G. Gage**, is one of those much to be admired, hard-working newspapermen — editor of two papers in St. John.

COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

The first meeting of the Federation Council will be held on Saturday, **October 23**, at 2.30 p.m.

Place: Macdonald High School, Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Your Association's three official Representatives are invited to attend, and the meeting is open to all Home and School members. For details of agenda, see your President.

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P-T INTERVIEWS, cont'd

pressed their appreciation of the interest and knowledge shown by the teachers, and the teachers, on their part, were agreeably surprised by the few facts necessary to point out to the parents the weaknesses and strengths of the children. The majority of parents seemed to know their children very, very well. Out of the more than 500 interviews not more than 6 were classified by the teachers as antagonistic, lacking in sympathy or understanding — in other words, disappointing.

The Findings

When it was all over the teachers sighed a deep sigh of relief — they were weary but they were pleased. A contact with the home had been made which in many, many cases could not have been established otherwise — or perhaps, too late. Out of the 33 class teachers involved, 6 were not in favour of renewal next year, and I was conditional on certain changes being made. It was felt that the following weaknesses were evident:

(a) Parents of pupils making very unsatisfactory progress, or whose attitude towards school was indifferent or rebellious, did not participate in the plan. However, these parents were, in most cases, contacted by me or the pupil was given special attention by the Guidance Counsellors.

(b) Interviews had to be cut short on occasions, and some teachers believed that only parents of unsatisfactory pupils should be asked to attend. But I am of the opinion that all parents should be given the opportunity to attend, even though the week of interviews might have to be lengthened.

What of the opinion of the pupils? Overwhelmingly against such nonsense! Many discovered that teacher and parent were in agreement as to the reasons for their shortcomings — too many outside activities, too little homework, lack of attention in class. While others discovered it was unnecessary and dangerous for them to study all evening and every evening — without play. But, all agree that the home and School were brought nearer together — much nearer than a telephone call, or a report sent home by mail.

Conclusions

The experiment was successful, and in our opinion the reasons for this success were:

(a) The careful planning by the Home and School Association with the co-operation of a loyal and faithful staff.

(b) Understanding parents, interested deeply in their children's development and at the same time placing confidence in the teachers and supporting them in their difficult and all-important task.

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ASSOCIATION REPORTS, cont'd

swers and concrete suggestions. Mr. Gordon Sinclair of Radio Station CFCF acted as moderator and did so in a style and manner that was greatly appreciated by all present.

A lively discussion from the floor took place and this was very refreshing because we now realize fully that our members are keenly interested in H & S activities and welcomed the opportunity of expressing themselves at an open meeting.

One major conclusion drawn from this meeting is that it is a good idea to stop, once in a while, and ask ourselves what we are doing and where we are going.

They "went to school"

E. Seaman, President, **Drummond**, reported:

Our best meeting this year was the result of a number of "gripes". It seems that many of our parents were dissatisfied with the lack of "excellent" ratings on their youngsters' reports. This problem was discussed at an exclusive meeting and Mr. Stewart, our principal, suggested and carried out an "Adult Education Program."

As each parent entered the hall they were given a folder containing a word scramble game, an arithmetic test and a grammar test. Mr. Stewart then explained that there would be a number of slides shown — just as a refresher of course — on grade school grammar and arithmetic.

A time limit was then given for each of the papers. They were then marked and totalled. How many of these bright parents (myself included) do you think had "excellent"? None! Ten or twelve had either "very good" or "good". These parents were issued "Certificates of Excellence" attesting to their ability to help their children with homework.

Following this more slides were shown on the interesting designs and scenes that can be done with colored paper stick-ups. Five or six people were then assigned to each classroom. There they found scissors, paste, colored paper, etc.

You should have seen some of the monstrosities. The best four pictures, or stick-ups, were selected and certificates of "The Ancient Order of Master Artists" presented to those participants.

A thoroughly entertaining evening was enjoyed by all with a little better than usual

opportunity to meet the other parents and we all realized that "excellents" on a report are the exception rather than the rule.

Mrs. Marjorie T. Procter, President, **Bronx Park**, reported:

Our Educational Open House, held in March, was extremely well attended and very much enjoyed by all.

After a short business meeting, Mr. A. W. Lang gave us a very witty but very wise account of his observations of the progress of education during the past 40 years. We were all heartened by his complete confidence that modern youngsters are no more headstrong, lazy or undisciplined than they were considered to be 40 years ago, but are certainly more literate.

After his talk parents were given the opportunity to visit the classrooms. Every member of the Staff was present and in each classroom text books and exercise books were on view on the children's desk. There were example of arithmetic tests, spelling tests and handwriting exercises on display around the walls as well as example of the children's art. Parents were encouraged to visit all the rooms and see all they wished, and the teachers were helpful in explaining courses of study and methods of teaching.

(to be concluded next month)

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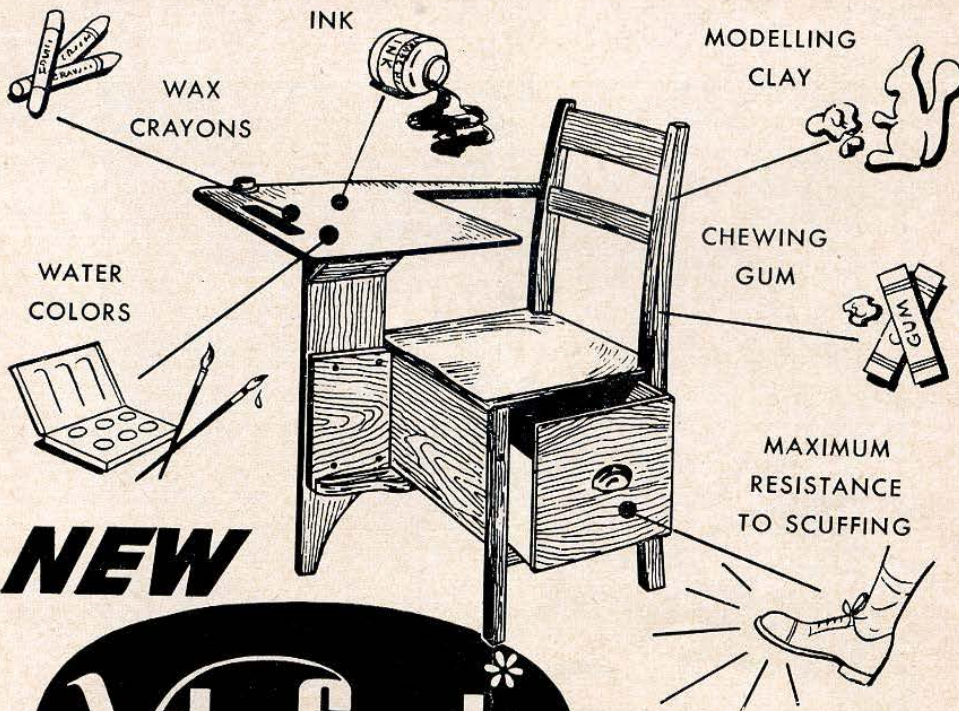
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