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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE

Important Bill on the Subject Introduced by Hon. Mr. Robinson---Mr. Magee Tells of the Good Work Accomplished by the Committee--Inadequacy of Present Educational System is Pointed Out.

The House met at 11 o'clock. MR. BURCHILL submitted the report of the Standing Rules Committee. HON. MR. ROBINSON introduced a bill respecting Vocational Education. MR. MAGEE said that it would be remembered that supplementary estimates for 1917 contained an item of \$2,500 to provide for an educational survey of New Brunswick. A committee had been appointed consisting of Messrs. Campbell, Belding, Tessier, Jennings, Peacock, King and Magee, and he wished to take this opportunity to thank the committee for the work they had done, especially the member for St. John city, Dr. Campbell, who had given so freely of his time and energy. He also wished to

thank Rev. Father Tessier and all the other members of the committee, including the secretary, Mr. Peacock, who had done valuable work.

The committee had held meetings at Halifax, where they interviewed the premier, the superintendent of education and the superintendent of Technical Education. They also met several times in St. John and several members had met in Boston and inspected schools in that vicinity. The secretary had attended the National Convention on technical education in Philadelphia and had returned with valuable information.

The report of the committee, with their findings and recommendations had been laid before the House and when the bill would come up for consideration, he hoped that suggestions would be received from both sides of the House. He wished to say that this was a non-political idea; members on both sides of the House were equally interested in promoting the interests of the children and of the workers of the province. The committee had studied vocational education methods of Europe, carefully considered the Robertson report, and had investigated conditions in this province and the present Act was the outcome of their investigations.

Their report showed that the sum of \$1,220,000 was expended in New Brunswick each year for educational purposes. There were 65,000 pupils in the schools, but only 1,200 in the

High School grades from IX. to XI. Not one per cent. of the pupils graduated and only one in 200 entered cultural or professional pursuits.

MR. MAGEE quoted at length from the report of the committee, to show the inadequacy of the present educational system to meet the needs of the province and the opportunity which was presented for educational work along vocational lines, showing also that a complete system of vocational training would apply to agricultural pursuits and home-making, as well as to industrial vocations.

MR. MAGEE, continuing, said that there was no provision for vocational education in New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island and that these were the only provinces in the Dominion which had no such provision. Only 15 per cent. of the people in the schools of the province continued after the 5th grade and the great problem was how to prevent that human wastage. Boys and girls had only one chance, under the present system, and that was to enter cultural or professional pursuits. With co-operation of public-spirited citizens and the assistance of the Legislature, he hoped that an opportunity would be given to supplement the present educational facilities. A school of 200 pupils, which enabled the pupils to double their earning capacity, would make each pupil on an average worth \$1,000 a year more and the community would thus show an economic gain of \$200,000. If the earning capacity in after life, of the 65,000 pupils in the public schools could be increased by even 5 per cent. it would result in an annual gain of \$3,250,000 to the province.

In 1912 the state of Wisconsin adopted vocational training and in the following year 30 schools were established with an average of 400 pupils in each. It was not expected that so great a number would be established in New Brunswick during the first year; finances would not permit. The bill provides for an Enabling Act, largely leaving it to cities and towns to decide whether they wished to maintain such schools and providing assistance in such event. He believed that the people of the province were in favor of this program. Many resolutions had been passed by the Manufacturers', Labor and other organizations, in favor of a forward step, and he believed that the taxpayers desired that there should be a more practical system than the present

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schools afford. Dr. Robertson had recommended that the Dominion should spend \$3,000,000 a year for ten years for this purpose. It was essential, more particularly at this time and in view of war conditions, that something should be done towards the establishment of industrial training in this province. Work of this character was being carried on by the Dominion for the Returned Soldiers, but it was a pity that the province had not already established facilities for this work.

The committee had sent out 1,500 questionnaires and had received back (Continued on page 6)

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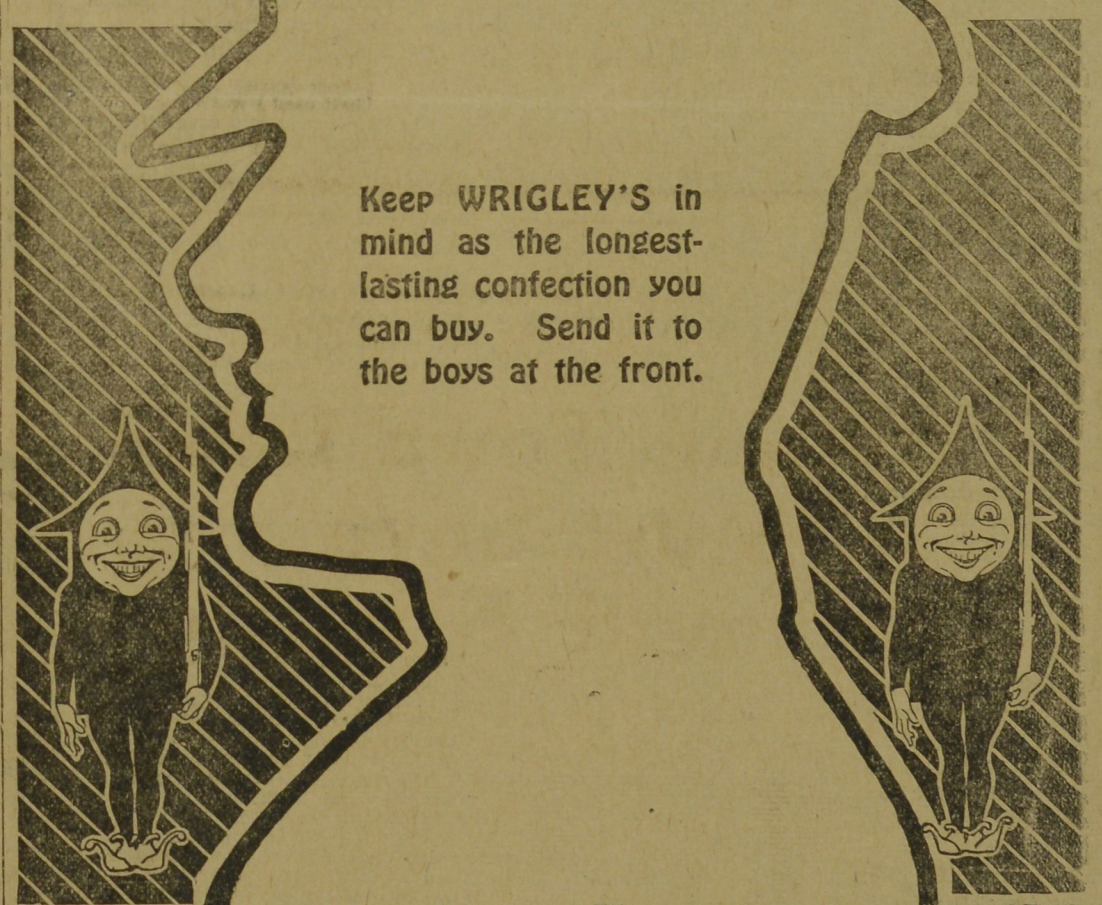
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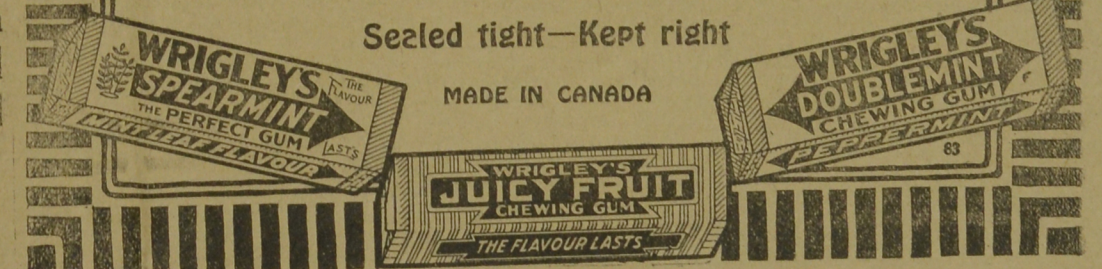
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