

INSPECTOR BRUELS IN REPLY TO AGGUSERS

REPLIES TO CHARGES MADE
AGAINST HIM.

The Observer on Tuesday evening had an interesting interview with Mr I. D. Bruels, Inspector of Public Schools for North Renfrew, with regard to the charges preferred against him and which led to his suspension for the second time this year by the County Council at its session last week. While of course surprised that the charges should be repeated after having been investigated by the Chief Inspector last spring, and while feeling that he has been unfairly dealt with in not having been given an opportunity to defend himself before being suspended, Mr Bruels apparently seems little concerned over the turn events have taken and seems confident that if a complete investigation is held the charges made will be easily disposed of. He says he is anxious that the investigation take place before a judge in order that the fullest possible scope may be given for the presentation of all charges and for his own defence, and holds that such an enquiry will undoubtedly go to prove that in his duties as Inspector he has at all times followed strictly the regulations laid down for his guidance by the Department of Education.

Taking the charges made against him categorically Mr Bruels dealt with each one, and in reference to the statement that he had shown partiality to certain teachers (which is understood to have reference to those of German descent) he characterizes it as "an absolute untruth," pointing out at the same time that there are but two teachers of German descent in the whole Inspectorate. As to permitting trustees to engage unqualified teachers, the Inspector says that this charge, too, is untrue, and that in no case has such permission been granted except where it was found impossible to secure qualified teachers. The charge that he encourages German children to attend German schools Mr Bruels holds to be ridiculous and says that it will be easily disposed of at the proper time. In regard to the marking of the entrance papers last year he says that the composition paper was the only one on which the marking was questioned and he regards it as incredible that anyone should seriously consider him incapable of properly examining composition papers. He says that his marking was eventually sustained and maintains that the Toronto authorities were responsible for the delay in publishing the entrance reports in 1915. As to being incapable of teaching the subject for which he was engaged in the Pembroke High School in 1913, Mr Bruels refers to the standing repeatedly given him by the High School Inspector and to his record both as principal and teacher in other high schools, and says that he was primarily responsible for changes made in the grading and organization of the local school which temporarily adversely affected his own department but which afterwards inured to the distinct benefit of the school, as shown in subsequent examinations. The other charges he also says are without foundation, and he feels that personal animosity is to a great extent responsible for the agitation against him. He maintains that he has followed the regulations as closely as he could possibly do so, and says that it is most difficult for any Inspector to discharge the duties of his position without incurring the displeasure of many trustees and others who do not look with favor upon the departmental regulations and who frequently expect the inspector to sanction violations of these in order to meet some peculiar local situation or satisfy local sympathies. The Inspector very often finds himself in an awkward predicament and frequently interested parties look to him for unreasonable favors and concessions which he is unable to grant except by overstepping the bounds of his authority.

Speaking of the investigation held last winter, Mr Bruels says that Mr Waugh saw all the interested parties whom it was possible to see while here. He had met the Warden and a number of members of the County Council, and then had gone to the schools from which complaints had reached him, hence the investigation was a very thorough one. Mr Bruels had accompanied the Chief Inspector on the request of Mr Waugh himself, driving him to several of the schools, but in each case the teacher had been taken aside and questioned, so that Mr Bruels in no way interfered.

As showing the progress made in the position of the schools of the inspectorate since he took office Mr Bruels points to the fact that there has been an increase of 250 per cent. in the number of normal trained teachers engaged, while the number of pupils writing on the entrance examination in 1912 was 167, as compared with 327 in 1916, and the number of pupils taking the public school graduation examination increased from 2 in 1912 to over 40