

TEACHERS' CONVENTIONS

By Mike Kostek, Archivist, EPS Archives and Museum

Teachers' conventions have been an educational ritual in Alberta for over a century.

The first Edmonton District Teachers' Association held their first annual convention on October 1 and 2, 1897.

An *Edmonton Bulletin* report described the event - a very large meeting attended by a total of 29 teachers and their Northwest Territories School Inspector J.A. Calder. Among the participants at the historic gathering of educators were legendary Edmonton

teachers George Welbourne, D. S. MacKenzie and Janet Harley. The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported that the convention program was well presented. The news article also listed that the following papers were read to participants:

Common Mistakes in Teaching Arithmetic
Primary Geography
School Discipline
History for Standards II and III
Literature and Supplementary Reading
Needs of Our Schools
Libraries for Rural Schools
Aims of Our Public Schools
Geography of Manitoba and the N.W.T.
The Use of Picture Numbers
Seat Work for Intermediate Classes

Teachers' conventions continued during World War I. Among the many topics discussed at the 1916 Convention was

one dealing with the "Problems of Composite High Schools." An interesting three stanza version of O Canada,

which was referred to as Canada's national song, was sung at the opening of each convention:

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ARCHIVIST'S CORNER

Teachers' Conventions

continued...

(Canadian National Song)

O Canada! Our home, and native land,
True patriot-love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The true North, strong and free;
And stand on guard, O Canada,
Stand aye on guard for thee.

CHORUS:

**O Canada! O Canada! O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee,
O Canada! O Canada! O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.**

O Canada! Where pines and maples grow,
Great prairies spread and lordly rivers flow.
How dear to us thy broad domain,
From East to Western Sea.
Thou land of hope for all who toil,
Thou true North, strong and free!

O Canada! Beneath thy shining skies
May stalwart sons and gentle maidens rise;
To keep thee steadfast through the years
From East to Western sea,
Our Father land, our Mother Land!
Our True North, strong and free!

(Teachers' Convention 1916)