

For SUMMER *Peelings* [Rec. March 29]

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First taught in Port Credit area in Peel County, 1955

I started teaching in the 1950's. My initial salary was \$2200 a year. The salary seems paltry today but one must consider that it was possible to buy a detached house in the Toronto area for \$16000. It is doubtful if a teacher today could buy such a house paying the equivalent of eight years salary.

At the time, one could enter the six-week teacher training course with grade twelve standing... one year short of a high school diploma.

My first assignment was teaching a mixed class of grade five and six and I loved it. The pupils were almost at my academic level and definitely matched my sense of humour. The classroom had green chalk boards and I was provided with chalk, brushes, a day book and a forty-centimeter-long strap which, I am thoroughly ashamed to say, I used on two occasions in my first year.

After teaching for two years, I returned to teachers' college for the compulsory completion year. When I returned for my third year of teaching I was made principal of a medium-sized elementary school... qualified on paper, but at the age of twenty-three, sorely lacking in experience.

One the final day of June ending my first year as a principal, I sat in on the grade eight graduating class. The teacher was a very competent experienced lady in her late thirties, much more qualified to be principal than I was, yet she accepted the situation quite gracefully. Why she did so became clear when she asked the graduating class: "Which of you boys would like to go on to become doctors and which of you girls would like to go on to become nurses." We've come a long way!