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Rural Schools.

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ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject of "Rural Schools," Prof. James W. Robertson, General Manager of the Macdonald College, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, P.Q., said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club of Toronto,—To a young and promising country like our own there is no subject upon which deeper interest should be manifested than that of education. Upon the training of the young, the citizenship of the morrow, must depend very largely the future of the country. It is very essential that the education of the children should be sound and thorough and true, and that they should have the advantage of the best systems of mental training we can provide for them.

Let me make a plea—a vigorous plea, if I am able—for industrial training in the schools. It is my conviction that there should be industrial and agricultural high schools throughout the Province, as well as the present professional schools. This is one of the educational ideals which we are endeavoring to bring to the attention of educational authorities through the Macdonald Agricultural College and manual training schools.

Cultured education must of necessity go hand in hand with vocational education. It is our thesis that upon the schools of the country depends the whole material, moral and intellectual progress and prosperity of Canada. There can be no cultural education that does not deal directly with a man's life, and the life of most men is a question of making a living.

An evidence of what scientific agricultural education is capable of doing is surely supplied by the fact that from practically the same area of land under cultivation Canada is now exporting one hundred million dollars' worth of farm produce, as compared with only forty-seven millions' worth ten years ago.

The United States a decade ago took Canada's hay and barley, two products which were steadily depleting the land. Now the character of the agricultural exports is changed. The export of six million dollars' worth of butter is far better for the nation than the export of a similar quantity of hay, for the dairy industry benefits rather than depletes the land.

But more important than progress from the materialistic standpoint is progress from the humanitarian standpoint. Increased satisfaction in living is more than increased wealth in land and buildings and manufactures. The spread of education, the development of the school system along natural lines of character development, is the most promising and fruitful source of a sound national prosperity in Canada. The bacon, the beef and the cheese products of Ontario have averaged during the last ten years a total increased annual product of \$30,000,000. But the amount spent on schools is only three and one-half millions per year. The chief asset of the nation, the children, are not getting their fair share of this increase in the nation's wealth.

The ignorance and short-sightedness which leads people to object to heavier school taxes should be earnestly combatted and the nation taught that the best way to lay up treasures is in the minds and characters of its youth. Taxation is the best gauge of civilization. The man who doesn't chip in shirks, and man is a social animal and shouldn't shirk. No man liveth unto himself. Taxation is part of the public service and expresses the higher civilization on which we pride ourselves. The man who objects to having his school tax raised fifty cents in order to give the youth of the land better mental nourishment is a narrow-visioned and unworthy citizen of this country. Toronto is not guiltless. Even in this city the teachers in the schools are not yet getting a salary commensurate with the lasting and basic importance of their work.

Evolution is working most directly through the young, and education determines its direction. Knowledge alone does not make a man, and it is time to realize that education is not merely a matter of books and pencils. The object of the school should be to give capacity rather than knowledge. The ignorance of the child must be developed into knowledge. But not this alone. His helplessness must also be developed into capacity and his selfishness into true public spirit. In these respects the English public schools are more wholesome than our own.

The boys of the country determine how the evolution of intelligence and strong character and general prosperity of Canada shall continue. Hence, above all other considerations of legislation comes the problem of bettering and expanding the school system. And this bettering of the school system is not guided merely by considerations of adding to knowledge and gainful information. There must not only be knowledge, but also understanding of how to live, how to do things, how to appreciate the best things. The boy must be taught not

only "learning," but also he must be made to actively do things, to work with both hands and heart, as well as with mind and memory. Cultural education should, as I have already said, go hand-in-hand with vocational education.

The real meaning of being a Briton is not to dominate, but to serve the best interests of the world. There is no way in which this can be done so well; there is no investment so profitable as work and money spent upon the intelligence and the capacity of the coming race. The ideals of school training should broaden out to include all the energies and faculties of the boy—heart and mind, and hand and eye. Clean living, self-sacrifice, good citizenship—these are subjects that need a large place in the school curricula. It is because it is worth your while to do these things that I have come to you and talked to you for this little while to-day.