

Education for the Improvement of Rural Conditions

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This beautiful Island is a place so charming in the open that I think you people in this hall have kindly sacrificed your comfort for the sake of paying me a compliment which I did not merit. When I come to the Island I find myself among friends whom I like, and who do me the kindness of liking me. It is very gracious on your part and very complimentary to me that you should have arranged a meeting at which I might say some things to the people in Charlottetown regarding the educational movement, in order that I might still further be able to co-operate with you. I am to speak to you on the subject of education for the improvement of rural conditions on the Island. The conditions of rural life on this Island are much the same as those of rural life elsewhere, but you have also problems peculiar to yourselves. These can be solved only by yourselves. Everybody has his own problems in life, and just so far as he solves these problems wisely, that is to say, with real benefit to others and himself, just so far is he successful.

What are some of the problems down here that may be peculiar to you as a people? There are problems due to your youth. You are young people; you have not much history in length. You have considerable history in depth; but your historical story is but brief. Youth has those fine qualities that belong to unsullied life and all those handicaps that accompany inexperience. You use forcible language in your descriptions of each other. Strong adjectives and plenty of superlatives are characteristic of the speech of youth. You will recover from that by-and-by. You have the problems arising out of your size. You occupy a comparatively small Province and are a few people. Canada is a very large country. Her immense area gives the people of Canada