

### Canada in the English Schools.

"Five years ago," says the *Canadian Gazette*, of London, England, "Canadians and other colonists had good ground for feeling 'hat the past history and present resources of their parts of the Empire had no real place in the education given in British schools. The information that was supplied came from handbooks hopelessly out of date and most imperfect. Many influences have been at work to reform this state of thing', and chief among them has been the circulation of the official literature of the Dominion Government. So helpful has this literature proved that Canada has been taken as the subject of special study in a very large number of schools, and it is impossible to overestimate the good that has been done in the correction of erroneous impressions among the parents as well as the children by this means, and by the widespread dissemination of such publications as the "Official Handbook" of the Dominion Government, issued under the auspices of the Colonial Office, and of such pamphlets as the reports of the tenant-farmer delegates, as well as good maps of the whole Dominion.

During the past few weeks we have seen some of the hundreds of letters of inquiry and thanks which have been received from teachers at the offices of the High Commissioner and the different Dominion agents throughout the United Kingdom. Last year the number of these letters from schoolmasters and mistresses reached a total of 1,639, and this year the correspondence from all parts of Great Britain is well maintained. Nearly all these letters speak of the handbook as having proved very useful and interesting as school readers, and some declare them to have been highly approved by Her Majesty's inspectors of schools during their periodical visits. Here is one letter from a schoolmaster in a large agricultural centre which is typical of many others. 'Two years ago,' he says, 'I received from you some very useful and instructive books on the Dominion of Canada, which enabled me to give my boys a better and truer knowledge of the resources of that vast Britain across the sea than could have been obtained from reading the geographical books in the market. That knowledge was very valuable during my past two years course of geography of the United States, by allowing me to make comparisons between life in the Dominion and in the States. I have also to thank you for the very excellent map which you sent me later on. I am now preparing a fresh class of boys in the geography of the Empire, and should be very glad to receive from you any further accounts or reports that you think would be of advantage. Of course, in so vast a territory changes are constantly occurring, and the development of the great Northwest Territories and British Columbia must always have something of interest to those who have to study the subject.'

Here is a typical letter from a much smaller centre in agricultural England. 'In this school,' says the village schoolmaster, 'we are this year doing the geography of the British Colonies, and so are taking the British possessions in North America. This is a very remote country school in a purely agricultural district,

ten miles from a railway station. It is a very poor neighborhood, there being no resident landlord and no gentry, except the clergyman, in the parish, so that books and maps of the geography of Canada are greatly valued. More than one family in the parish have relatives in Canada, and the uncle of four children attending this school has been home from Toronto this summer, and he has given us descriptions of Canadian life.'

In some schools a regular Empire course has been adopted. 'As a class reader,' says one schoolmaster, 'I am about to use that very useful book 'Round the Empire,' by your co-patriot, Mr. Parkin, and as a special reference reader for the Dominion the 'Reports of the Tenant Farmers,' of which I still possess copies in good order. Then, as instruction, I for my own preparation use the 'Official Handbook of Information,' a book that might with great advantage be used as a reader in our schools if certain parts were omitted. You will thus see that it is my wish to thoroughly instruct my pupils as to the resources and character of that land which is yet destined to be the home of many millions of British people, and I feel sure that in this I shall have your sympathy and support.'

All this must be regarded as most gratifying, for the better Englishmen are taught to understand the Colonies the less likelihood is there of any weakening of the ties of Empire, and the less tendency will there be on the part of emigrants to drift beyond the axis of the British flag."

### Mennonite Homes.

From the *San Francisco Chronicle*

Chortiz and Schwanzenfeld, in Manitoba, are like oases in the vast and treeless prairie, because the Mennonites have succeeded in growing trees where other colonists have failed. Each house stands in about a quarter of an acre of garden, planted around with poplars and ash-leaved maples; inside these, which serve as wind break, are plum and crab-apple trees, and a sort of hedge of gooseberry and currant bushes. In the centre of the garden are flower beds, blazing with the scarlet poppy and fragrant with mignonette. The beds are divided from one another by a wicker work fence, woven into a fanciful pattern.

The houses themselves are large square frame buildings, banked around with a white clay wall or terrace, about three feet high and a foot and a half broad. The effect is quaint, but good, as the wall is smooth and well made. The house door opens directly into the living room, with its floor of concrete of their own manufacture. Round the sides of this—the largest and most interesting room in the house—are high, broad, yellow benches for sitting or sleeping, and under the window stands a long table.

Running out into the middle the room is the front projection of a Russian furnace made of white clay, with a great iron basin sunk in the top. This is used for various purposes—to heat water for washing or to catch the blood of a pig when it is killed, blood pudding being a favorite dish with them. Behind the basin is an oven for baking bread, which they make in huge loaves, filling the whole interior, so that a Mennonite loaf would easily cover the top of

a little drawing table. The back of the furnace rises to within a foot or two of the roof and forms a greater part of the partition between the living room and the bedroom behind it.

In this second room the back of the furnace looks like a small square chamber with a narrow deep opening in the side. In this recess the women place the kettle or anything to be boiled. Neither wood nor coal is burned, but a fuel is made of manure and clay—a sort of peat. All the refuse is collected from the stables and mixed with clay and water; it is pressed down with a roller and left to dry after which it is cut out in square blocks with a spade and piled ready for burning. It can easily be understood that when this stuff is ignited the odor is more overpowering than agreeable.

Screwed against the wall is a curious old-fashioned uncased clock, made more than a century ago, with its large brass hands and pendulum worked in elaborate and fantastic patterns. These are cleaned and polished until they gleam like pale gold, and the women take especial pride in them, as they are heirlooms.

### A Concession to Ranchers.

With a view to settling the trouble with the Alberta ranchers, the Dominion Government has informed them that they can now purchase ten per cent of their leasehold and convert it into freehold for two dollars per acre. This will enable them to have a smaller range of territory, which they can fence in and so do away with the "squatter" trouble, about which they complain so much at present. A rancher, for instance, who holds 100,000 acres can purchase 10,000 acres for \$20,000. When the lands were leased to ranchers in the first instance a clause was put in the agreement that the owner could purchase a homestead farm. The amount of such homestead was not specified. It has now been definitely decided to make this ten per cent of the leasehold. As to complaints about wolves destroying cattle, the Dominion Government cannot see their way to give a reward for each animal killed. That is a matter which belongs to the Northwest Territories.

### A Slow Boy.

A youth in one of our southern neighbors then frontier states was sent out for a back log. Two were in the yard and he chose the smaller as being more in his power to carry. "There's a bigger one there, fetch it in," said his father. Bud went out, and while passing through the kitchen, took his rifle, pouch and powder horn and disappeared. After some years of ups and downs, ending in one gigantic Bud, who had become Governor of the state. He had often intended to visit the old home, and now he set out. Through the window he could see his father bent, old and gray, seated by the old fire place, in which the fire burned low. In the yard he saw a giant back-log, and, picking it up, he presented himself to his father after a separation of years. "There, dad, there's your back-log." The old man took the pipe from his mouth, looked at the stalwart man before him and said "Well, you've been a—long time about it."