

MARITIME MINING RECORD.

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A SOUND FOUNDATION

It has been said by a contemporary that if the Royal Commission on Technical Education has done nothing else than called attention to the prime need of a sound elementary education, it has justified its creation and existence. To the hint of our contemporary that the teachers are to be blamed for the fact that too many scholars are lacking in the rudiments, we take exception. It is not so much the fault of the teachers as that of the system. In our schools we have an overloaded curriculum. We turn out scholars who, in a majority of cases, have a smattering of many subjects, and are proficient in none. In a sense they are jacks of all branches and masters of none. Lads are to be met with who could give the old-time scholars a wrinkle in mathematics, and yet, at the same time cannot but a couple of sentences in passable English. When a lad has gone through the several grades and graduated from the high school, he receives, probably, a diploma for general excellence, which may mean much until his general scholarship is put to the test, when it is found to count for very little. Perhaps too much attention is now paid in our schools to what may be termed the ornamental side of education. A lad may be a good mathematician, a fair Latin scholar, and yet be unable to dictate a sentence, or tell the difference between those and these. If scholars are not thoroughly grounded in the three R's all the rest of their education is of little account. Good readers, good arithmeticians, should be the sine qua non of the product of our schools, before it is entitled to be called sound, solid and practical. He would not insist that good writing should be deemed essential, for in very many instances good penmanship is only attained by practice. The scholar who knows history, geography, what good grammar is, and can do the sums required in every day life, should receive a diploma as an efficient English scholar, whether or not he knows the difference between amobam and amohat. The subjects in which the graduate is efficient should be distinctly intimated, and the scholar efficient in English should be accorded a higher standing than the one efficient in Latin or philosophy, who is deficient in the essentials of that education which counts in every-day life. Since writing the foregoing we have glanced over the Education Report for last years, and are pleased to note that several of those who write in its pages take a sane view of education. Let a couple of quotations suffice for the present.

"The study of English grammar and analysis does not receive the attention it should in many of the schools, both graded and miscellaneous. In writing thus I know that I incur the risk of being called 'unorthodox,' but if I err I do so in good company. McLellan, in his 'Applied Psychology,' warns the teacher to be on his guard against the prevailing attempts to belittle the study of analysis and grammar. 'Analysis,' he says, 'trains to power of rapid apprehension, of expressive reading, and of clear and concise expression of thought.' This neglect of grammar and analysis could be excused if more and better work were being done in English composition. But such I do not find to be the case. Although it is one of the most important branches taught in our schools, doing more, as someone has said, to prepare a pupil for success in many departments of life than almost any other, yet it is greatly neglected. In some schools I found absolutely nothing that one could call English composition."

The school course at present is a very heterogeneous mixture. In the old-time public schools, reading, writing and arithmetic only were taught. Then grammar and history were added. Later came the dead languages and modern languages, manual training, music, domestic science, etc. During all this time, industry passed through a number of stages of its evolution with great rapidity and produced radical changes in economic and social life. The educational curriculum was not changed to keep pace with economic and social evolution and to-day presents an overcrowded, ill digested, disconnected appearance. Everywhere there is a demand for simplification and readjustment to modern conditions. As long as civilization is on an industrial basis, there is a demand for an industrial background to education. The subjects in the school curriculum must be vitalized by making them apply to modern life. The educational content of every course must be closely examined to determine whether or not it may be made more practical and still retain its educational value. If the parent and child believe that the work in the school is of economic value to the child in preparing for actual life, then the youth will stay in school and the necessary appropriations will be forthcoming from the people for the additional expense of the schools.

There is another thing that must be clearly understood by everybody, teachers and public alike, and that is that the industrial training must be a supplement to the schools as they exist to-day and not a substitution of any work that is being offered. The common schools have always been, and always will be, the basis of all education.

PREMIER MURRAY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT.

"Strong, practical leadership is required now in Nova Scotia, more than at any other time because on one hand Mr. Murray has piled up a very heavy public debt and on the other hand has wasted the coal and lumber and other natural resources of the province, and a large part of the revenue is consumed paying interest on debt.

"One of the many prominent Liberals who recognizes the need of a more capable man in the position of premier is Hon. R. Drummond, a member of the legislative council. He says:

"The loss of revenue from royalty is but a small