

Industrial Education Situation in Canada

An Account of What Has Been Done for Technical and Industrial Education in Canada as a Result of the Movement Started Four Years Ago by the C.M.A.; and an Explanation of the Situation as it Now Exists. A Commission of Three to be Appointed to Investigate; Funds now Being Raised.

One of the most important problems before the manufacturing interests of Canada at the present time is that of trade and technical education. For the past four years, the matter has been given considerable attention by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and during those four years very considerable work has been done towards organizing a movement which will result in the accomplishing of something.

It looks now as if these efforts had finally culminated into something definite. At first it was aimed to accomplish something through the Dominion Government, as it was felt to be a national question; but constitutional difficulties arose, and now the Provincial Governments are being approached individually by the Committee appointed at the last convention of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association held in Montreal in September of this year.

Prospects are bright for the raising of the necessary funds to thoroughly study the needs of the various provinces, and to investigate thoroughly systems of trade and technical education existing in other countries, in order that some system may be devised which will fill the requirement of different sections of the Dominion.

A HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

The object of the present article is to discuss the various steps leading up to the present situation, and to explain that situation thoroughly as it now stands. This, no doubt, will prove of very great interest to many manufacturers throughout the country.

The movement was started formally in 1904 at the annual convention of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association in Montreal, when the following resolution was passed:

"Whereas the importance of technical education to the manufacturing industries warrants and requires the establishing of modern, thoroughly equipped technical schools throughout Canada; and

"Whereas the instituting of a general system, with one standard curriculum, requires that all the schools should be under one central management; and

"Whereas it is the function of the Federal Government alone to properly organize such a system of schools throughout the Dominion;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the association should, through a special committee, investigate the subject of technical education, as it is dealt with in other countries, with a view to recommending early action on the part of the Dominion Government in inaugurating a national movement for a standard system of technical education in Canada."

As is clearly shown in this resolution the aims of the Association in the first place was to gain the interest and support of the Dominion Government in the movement.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTED.

A standing committee was appointed at the same convention, composed as follows: S. M. Wickett, chairman; Alfred Burton, Thomas Findley, Gerhard Heintzman, Harold Van der Linde, J. P. Murray, Geo. A. Howell, W. F. MacKay, W. T. Whitehead, L. H. Packard, and Wm. Pakenham.

This committee presented a report the following year

at the convention in Quebec. This report dealt chiefly with the importance of the part played by technical education in the industrial development of Germany, England and the United States. This report concluded with this recommendation:

"That the Dominion Government be requested to appoint a Commission to report on the best method for establishing a comprehensive national system of technical education to provide Canadian industry and commerce with trained assistants from amongst the Canadian people, and thereby aid in developing Canadian industry, and do away with the present condition of affairs, which compels employers to go abroad for men to occupy the more responsible and more remunerative positions in Canadian enterprises."

THE MEMORIAL OF 1906.

This recommendation having been approved of, a memorial was drawn up and presented to the Government on May 11, 1906, pressing for the appointment of a Commission of enquiry. Various arguments with which the members of the Association are already familiar were advanced in support of the petition, in addition to which an effort was made to anticipate the objections which it was known would be raised on constitutional grounds. In this connection it was shown:

(1) That the B.N.A. Act need be no barrier to action, for while it left education to the provinces, it entrusted the regulation of trade and commerce to the Dominion, and technical training was in a substantial measure a part of the national industrial policy.

(2) That the examples of other countries having federal governments, such as Germany and the United States, amply justified the Dominion in giving aid to industrial education;

(3) That by establishing experimental farms and biological research stations, by conducting an engineering course at Kingston, by contributing to the support of the Railway Department of McGill University, and in other ways, the Dominion Government had already evinced a direct interest in our educational problems, thus making its own precedent.

This memorial was endorsed by each of the branches of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association; by the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress; by the leading universities; by twenty-eight Boards of Trade in Canada; and by the Press. This goes to show the hearty support the work of the Association was receiving.

ENDEAVOR TO INTEREST DOMINION GOVERNMENT.

Meanwhile an active canvas of members of the Cabinet and of private members was carried on at Ottawa; and from the opinions expressed the Technical Education Committee of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association believed that good headway was being made. But in the fall of 1907 the question assumed a different aspect from the result of an interview a deputation from the Toronto Reform Association had with the Premier on the question. The difficulty revealed itself in a decided reluctance on his part to depart from his traditional policy of safeguarding provincial rights. This led the committee of the C.M.A. to seek the individual support of the Provinces. As a result British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova