

In some of the provinces the Superintendents of Education were men of scientific attainments, who saw the importance of the study of nature as a means of maintaining and developing that sympathetic attitude towards nature that characterizes the child before he attends school, of fostering the habit of close observation, and of creating that scientific spirit of enquiry in the effort to get at the truth. The influence of such men as Dr. MacKay in Nova Scotia, and Dr. Seath in Ontario, at the heads of the Departments of Education, did a great deal to pave the way for the new Movement in their respective provinces, at a time when their ideas were in advance of legislative opinion.

The last agency to which I shall refer, is the Macdonald Rural Schools Fund, supplied by Sir William C. Macdonald of Montreal, and administered by Dr. James W. Robertson, now of the Macdonald College, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. The improvement of rural schools was the main object of this Fund. The means adopted were: (1) The building and maintenance of a large consolidated school in each of the four eastern provinces, as object lessons; (2) The training of a certain number of teachers in Nature-Study, Manual Training, and Domestic Science for service in rural schools; and (3) The maintenance of a group of school-gardens in each of the five eastern provinces, with a travelling instructor for each group, and all in perfect harmony with the education Departments of the provinces concerned.

The school-garden is now recognised as a most potent factor in the education of the young by begetting habits of close observation, thoughtfulness and carefulness. Properly used, the garden is "a means to an end, not the end itself,—the end being the symmetrical education of the child. The school-garden seeks education through utility and utility through education".

The teachers trained at the Macdonald Institute, Guelph, on their return to their schools have preached strenuously the doctrines of the new Movement.

Besides these direct results of the Macdonald Rural Schools Fund, the indirect results have been very marked. While many persons have been unable to see the Macdonald Consolidated Schools and school-gardens, there are very few persons who have not read about them and learned the object of their establishment. The object of the Fund has been achieved both directly and indirectly. The Consolidated Schools have performed most excellent service in showing better types of school buildings and in providing more efficient teachers and more effective teaching for rural life.