

What have we seen in Canada? Several provinces with no compulsory educational requirement; except in a few places no real insistence on general education, and the adjuncts of a sympathetic and persuasive education entirely lacking. When we think of the hundreds of small groups of children in Canada in the so-called little red school-houses, when there are uncertificated and incompetent teachers by hundreds in many provinces, and when there are thousands of boys and men unable to read or sign their names to a pay-roll, we may well be ashamed to see in Belgium or Switzerland greatly higher general school opportunities; indeed we may see enough to give us pause as self-confident Canadians.

It is surely with pain that we contrast the thorough preparation secured from the Gymnasium in Germany and the High Schools of Edinburgh, Glasgow or London, with what those of us who have been Educationalists for years have seen of hundreds of our poorly prepared matriculants, who present themselves for a University course.

An investigation into our factories, machine shops and business places all through Canada tells the same story, that the working lads coming from our schools have been very poorly instructed. We used to think the three Rs a very modest measure of acquirement for a lad leaving the public schools, but now we are quite familiar with his having not even that acquisition.

We cannot disguise the fact from ourselves, that, though Governments seem to make liberal donations to education, though many municipalities take pride in their public schools, though the inspectorates are well manned, yet there is in almost every province of the Dominion growing up a very considerable percentage of the young who are practically illiterate.

Now, this very lamentable state of things, which in the last forty or fifty years of our experience has been forming the standards of hundreds of our communities in all the provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, has produced a public opinion none too favorable to higher culture and the acquisition of a good sound education. The Mechanics in many cases do not value the reputation for efficiency. Men, as we have seen them—"handymen"—undertake to do work which they cannot do and "turn their hand" to anything that may present itself. A member of the Royal Commission had a stock question for carpenters:—"Could you build a winding staircase or a complicated house-roof?" Not one quarter of the witnesses could answer "Yes."

Teachers on permits without knowledge or facility make teaching a farce. Doctors have entered their profession who did not adorn it, and even, I am afraid, ministers innocent even of "Scant Latin and less Greek" were none too strong either in philosophy or general erudition.