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Where Western Canada Fails.

In Matters of Education Manitoba is a Long Way Behind. Importance of Wage Earning and Home Making. By J. Richardson.

"How many of you children have seen the sea?"

Over four hundred young Canadians were asked this question by Dr. Robertson, the chairman of the Royal Commission on Technical Education and Manual Training which recently went through the West.

One boy put up his hand in one corner. Another did the same in another corner. One girl in the middle of the class-room thought she had seen the sea but could not say for sure. Anyhow, she lifted her hand. One little fellow was certain that he had seen it because he still remembered being sea-sick when his mother brought him from England. Altogether, out of those four hundred scholars, only four had seen the sea.

It sounds like a backwoods story, but it isn't. The children were not living thousands of miles from civilization, but in Brandon, one of the most progressive cities in Manitoba, and they were sitting in the assembly room of the public school the city thinks so much of.

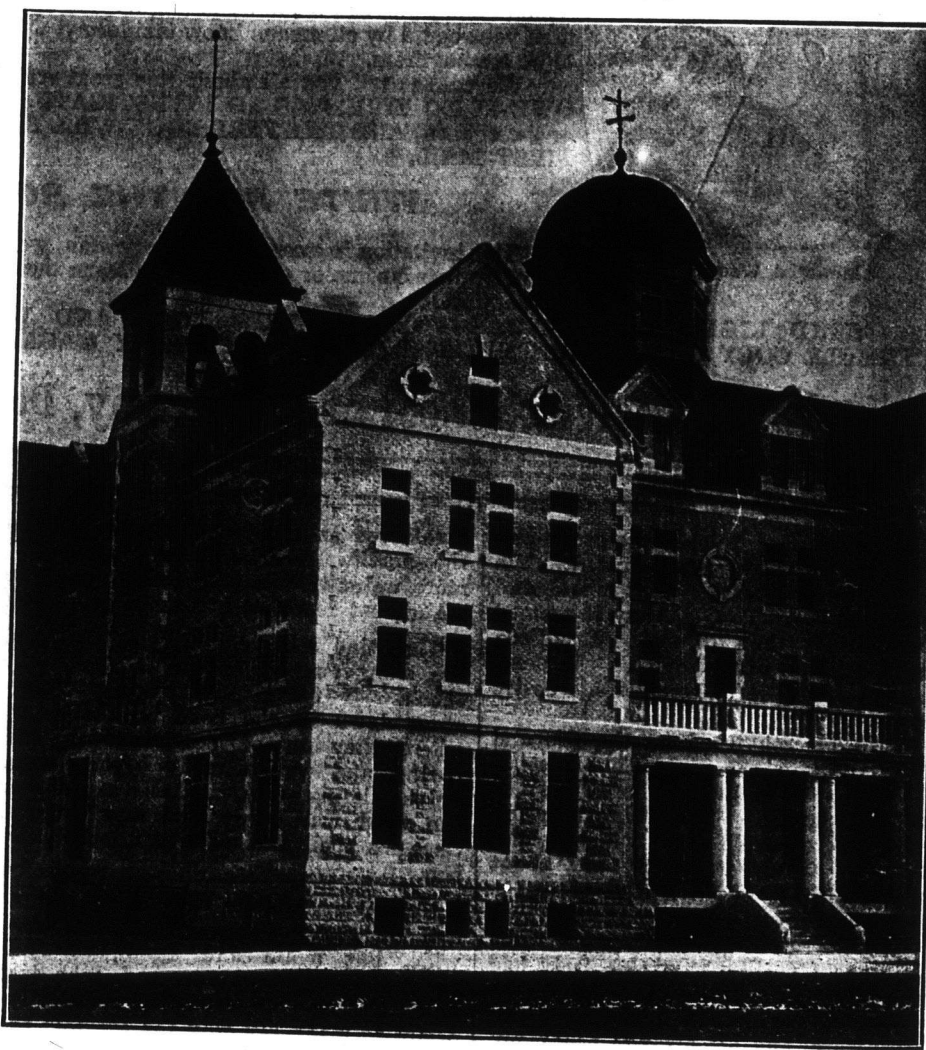
When those four hands went up it

saw a well pastured field I would turn round and say, "Mother, do you think there are any mushrooms there?"

The sight of the sea dazzled me. I could not understand how it was the horizon seemed so low. If I asked the question once, I asked a dozen times where all the water came from. I went home the same night in the same train. I did not look out of the carriage window and wonder where the mushrooms were. I leaned my head against my mother and dreamed of the boats, the waves, the crabs, and I fancied myself paddling with my boots slung across my shoulder. I had had a new experience—I had seen the sea.

This is the picture I painted when I saw those four hands go up in that Brandon school. "The 396 don't know what they have missed," I remarked to Dr. Robertson.

But the fact that only four out of four hundred scholars had seen the sea was not the most lamentable thing that impressed me as I accompanied the Royal Commission through Manitoba.



The Reformatory at Portage La Prairie. For the Bad Boys of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

made me think of the time I first saw the sea. I was about twelve years of age then. I had heard a lot about the sea. I had seen pictures of children playing on the sands. Some of my playmates, whose parents were better off than mine, would come from their holidays carrying little wooden spades and buckets. They would tell me how they had made sand houses on the beach, how the tide had washed them away, and how they had romped in the sunshine.

One day my mother told me she was going to take me to the sea-side. I could scarcely believe it. I dreamed about it. I asked all my schoolmates if they had been to Scarborough. Some of them had; most of them hadn't. Anyhow, I was going, and I went.

It was an annual excursion the colliers have in the North of England towns. I remember to this day how I woke at five o'clock in the morning to catch a train that went at nine. In the crowded railway carriage I got a seat next to the window, and I noticed everything the train passed. When I

Girls Could Typewrite but Scorned Cooking.

In the same Brandon school, Dr. Robertson asked how many girls could cook. "How many of you girls can cook?" Why the question seemed too old fashioned for the up-to-date girls of Brandon. Some of them could manipulate the Remington typewriter, but they had never given a thought to cooking. If there was a girl in that class room who could cook she was afraid to confess before her school chums what she thought was a weakness.

So, in some Western towns it is considered far more important to teach a girl how to hammer away at a typewriter than to teach her the rudiments of homemaking.

"If the future of Canada depended on real estate values, she might be all right," Commissioner James Simpson said when we returned to the Government car at the station. "But it doesn't. It depends upon the sort of homes those girls make."

Dr. Robertson could not leave that