

The School

"Recti cultus pectora roborant"

Editorial Notes

Sir James Whitney and Education.—Sir James Whitney was not an educationist, he was a lawyer. In the larger and more productive period of his life he was neither lawyer nor educationist; he was a statesman. It is probable, indeed, that he knew no more about the problems of education than a very busy public man could be expected to know. And yet he had two or three characteristics which made him a better friend of public education than many of the educationists in Ontario's history.

He knew and trusted men. Having chosen the administrators of the Education Office he loyally supported their administration. It is probable that no period in Ontario's educational history has been so fruitful in changes, in changes that disturbed long-established conditions and dipt deep into the pockets of the ratepayers, as the last nine years. And yet Sir James never hesitated to endorse the action of his educational advisers. He was sure they were right, and went ahead.

Sir James believed in the importance of education. To him it was worth every sacrifice. This was not a belief of the lips. To speak with him was to act. He supported changes which doubled, and, in some services, trebled the expenditures on public education.

And Sir James had a keen sense of proportion. He was neither liberal nor conservative and yet he was both. He could be a radical in his support of the Hydro-Electric, and a conservative of the conservatives in his stand on the question of taxation. He endorsed the plans of the Minister of Education for the reform of the Public Schools at one end of the educational scale and just as warm was his endorsement of all plans for the reorganization of the Provincial University at the other end. Between the two ends lay the High Schools. These had prospered mightily between 1885 and 1905 and men thought that the ministry of Sir James could afford to neglect them for a time. But not so. Continuation Schools, Agricultural High Schools, technical instruction of High School grade, the equipment, staffing, and attendance of the High Schools all attest today the determination of Sir James and the Department of Education to observe due proportion by neglecting nothing.