

that a lesson here and there is to be dovetailed into the books, to give them a semblance of being Canadian. Neither do I believe that Indian legends, stories of many heroes who have died on Canadian soil, nor even sketches of battles that have been fought, are sufficient to entitle them to be called Canadian. Surely the 470,000 boys and girls in our Public Schools should learn something more about their native land than the simple fact that our country was at one time the theatre of war between the English and the French, and at another, between the English and the Americans. Something more is required. What shall it be? Have we not almost illimitable forests? Are not our mines practically exhaustless? Is not our soil as fertile as any in the world? And our climate, has it any superior? Do not our waters abound in fish and our forests with game? Is not the scenery of the St. Lawrence, the Muskoka region and the upper Lakes as fine as any in the world? Have we not municipal and educational institutions that compare favorably with those of older countries? to say nothing of our manufactures, our commerce and the various industries scattered throughout the different Provinces. And yet, if we turn over the pages of our authorized reading books, do we find any of these subjects presented with a fair degree of fulness? Are they not more conspicuous by their absence than by their presence? The great majority of our children finish their education in our Public Schools, and I can see no reason why they should not be taught more concerning our own country, its resources and capabilities than has yet been done. I have unbounded faith in its future, but I cannot help feeling that the publishers and editors of our school books have overlooked many things that are of very great value to us as

Canadians. There is certainly room for improvement in this direction. To meet our present wants, lessons explaining the nature and functions of our municipal institutions and our local and federal Parliaments should find a place in our books. In short, our children should be taught to know how we are governed; how and for what purpose taxes are collected, and how justice is administered. These matters are of great practical value to the young, and when treated of in a general way, can be easily understood. This is rendered necessary by our system of local self-government. Soon these boys and girls will enter upon the active duties of life, and it must be apparent to every thoughtful person that it is better to have them understand these things than to have their minds filled with much that now finds a place in our reading books.

The leading thought in the preparation of these books seems to be to make literary men and women of our children, or to fit them for some of the learned professions. We are too much influenced by examinations and too little by the necessities of our every day life. Our reading books deal too much with the things of the past. There is an idea quite prevalent that, for a person to be considered reasonably well educated, he must have an intimate knowledge of the language and history of Greece and Rome, no matter how ignorant he may be of those of his own country, and of his duties as a citizen. The pursuit of this knowledge may be very pleasant and attractive for those who have the means and inclination to pursue it, but for the children of the workingman, and the farmer, something of a more practical nature is required. Some of the things I have already mentioned should be taught in our Public Schools, and this