

# AMERICAN MECHANICAL MAGAZINE AND PATENT OFFICE RECORD

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## TECHNICAL EDUCATION

REQUIRED FOR CANADIAN MECHANICS.

**I**N another month the fifth volume of this MAGAZINE will be completed, and it is with much regret that we have to place on record the totally inadequate support it has received from that class for whose instruction and information it was intended. Indeed so far from receiving even a moderate share of encouragement from Canadian mechanics, it must have fallen to the ground had it not been for the support it has received from many not connected with mechanical work, but who felt interested in the scientific information contained within its pages. It was to be hoped that the great improvements made during the past two years in its typography, illustrations and selection of subjects, would have largely increased its circulation—as its now ranks favorably with any other scientific work published on this continent. Its price, too, can be no drawback, as two dollars per annum any mechanic can afford to pay in whom the desire to acquire knowledge is sincerely felt; but unfortunately for them and the country they live in, that class who alone of themselves should be able to support a mechanical magazine published in their midst, seem dead to reading any work that would tend to instruct them and elevate their positions in life, therefore we cannot refrain from passing upon the mechanics of Canada, as a body, a severe censure for such unmistakable apathy to the acquirement of scientific knowledge of any sort, but, more particularly, for that branch which appertains to their own trades. In this apparent apathy there must be some reason deeper than that of a simple disinclination to study. Why should the mechanics of Canada be so far behind those of the United States in mechanical talent and general intelligence? It is not because they are deficient in ability or intelligence, but because any latent talent they may possess is never awakened by a proper kind of instruction in their youth. It is a hard thing to say of our own countrymen, but take our mechanics, as a body, and nine-tenths of them know little

more than the use of the few simple tools they have been taught to use; nine-tenths of them, if deprived of the foreman who directs their movements, would be totally unable to complete any job upon which they have been employed; nine-tenths of them are content, after their day's work is over, to sit down and smoke till bed time, without one single thought of improving their minds by reading any class of work that would tend to elevate their thoughts and improve their condition. To what then is this distaste for literature to be attributed? We reply to the want of a technical education in youth, which, we regret to believe, is almost totally ignored in our common schools. In country schools, education is principally confined to books of a mere elementary character, and even in the higher class of schools, where a mathematical education is given, it is taught in a most impractical way, leaving the student ignorant of its application to practical science.

There is no more important body of men in the Dominion than the mechanics. It is to their skill, labour, and inventive genius that we are to look forward for the enrichment of this country by working up its crude wealth into such shapes and uses as will bring from foreign countries gold in exchange. It is the gold that will be received for these ores when manufactured, for our timber, and the produce of the land, that will ultimately make this a great and wealthy nation, and the longer the mechanical genius of the country remains uneducated and undeveloped, the longer will its wealth and power be retarded. To turn our rich but crude resources to the greatest advantage, we contend that mechanical and agricultural education in our common schools should receive more attention from the heads of the departments of education. The mere routine of a school education seldom develops a taste in boys for further study in leisure hours after leaving school; they content themselves, as their fathers did before them, with just sufficient knowledge of their trades to eke out an existence; it is therefore a necessity that technical instruction should be given in such a form as to create a desire for further information, and something exhibited in the way of practical lectures to be an incentive to study.

During the two past years that we have conducted this MAGAZINE, we have strenuously endeavored to impress upon mechanics the necessity of giving to such of their