

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

ABROAD AND AT HOME.

In the following pages I wish to consider how Nova Scotia compares with other civilized countries in the matter of technical education. By technical education, I mean those forms of education which assist the people of a country in the development of its natural resources. I shall, therefore, have nothing to say of legal, medical, or theological education, or of that form of school and university training whose object is culture. Not that in these departments we have attained or are already perfect. We are in them also far behind the rest of mankind. But their effect on the development of the resources of the country, though of the greatest importance, is indirect. The effect of technical education would be direct; and yet the most of us are quite unconscious of the great gulf which in this matter separates us from the rest of civilization.

To make this gulf apparent, I shall first give a short sketch of the facilities for technical education which are supplied by other countries to their people, and compare with them those which Nova Scotia affords her sons. I shall then bring facts to show the value of this kind of education, and point out what forms of it Nova Scotia ought to have if she wishes to compete with other countries or even only with the other Provinces of Canada. Finally I shall consider the best means of establishing the necessary schools, and endeavour to make some estimate of their cost.

The best systems of technical education are to be found in Europe. In the short space at my disposal, however, it would be impossible to describe the systems of all the European nations. Let me therefore select one for somewhat detailed description. In the case of the others it will be sufficient to point out only those of their features which are of special interest to us. I select for detailed description the Swiss canton of Zurich, not because in respect of technical education it is foremost among the European nations, but because it has a population of only about 300,000, and can therefore readily be compared with Nova Scotia.

In the Swiss republic, as in the various States of Germany, primary education is compulsory. The period of compulsion extends over nine years. The first six are spent in the primary school, where the