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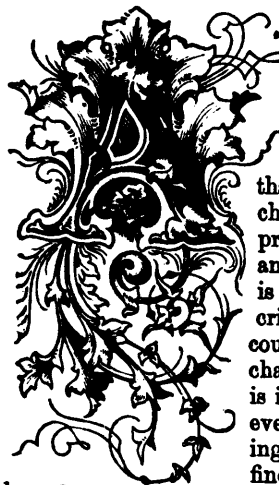
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GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING MODERN AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.



S the result of a radical change in the occupations and conditions of practical life, the present has become emphatically a period of agitation and revolution in all that relates to the training of children and youth. From the primary schools to high schools and universities, the instruction is subject to sharp vigorous criticism, with propositions and counter propositions looking to change and improvement. Nor is it a mere local system. Wherever any interest is felt in training children and youth, there we find a controversy as to what

knowledge is of most worth, and as to the best methods of imparting instruction.

The feeling is gradually growing stronger that a readjustment of the courses of instruction in our public schools should take place to meet the demands of the times, and that physical and technical science should receive more consideration than hitherto has been given to it. It is technical education that the youth of Canada require, so that in a country where a great future depends upon its early development, there should be practical training of young men in technical schools, that they may be able to direct, with intelligence and economy, the expenditure of human labor in those vast constructive enterprises which characterize our times in all the varying fields of industry.

The first Napoleon was one of the earliest advocates of these schools, which have already become so numerous in Europe, and still are not found to be sufficient; hence Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia and other advanced European countries are enlarging the scope of their instruction, and giving particular attention to chemistry and mechanism. Now what we require in Canada is a modification of the teaching in our public schools of all grades, so that it shall have a much more direct and

telling influence upon the common needs of practical life. It is our desire that when boys and girls, when they leave the public schools, shall carry with them those elements of knowledge, taste, and skill, that will prove of the most direct and essential service in the various pursuits in which nearly all of them must engage. These elements having been once mastered, further progress becomes comparatively easy in case any one, after leaving a public school, desires to continue his studies.

There is, of course, opposition to be expected to all proposed changes that spring in part from that natural inertness of the mind which stands out against all change; in fact from those who have learned to teach the old, and, in part, from a misconception of what it is that education owes to the requirements of practical life to-day, and in part, also, from the fact that change necessitates new studies on the part of the teachers and also an additional expenditure of money.

Within the last sixty years the occupations of men have everywhere greatly increased in number and greatly changed in character. Manufactures in Canada, as a specialty, were hardly known, the housewife did her spinning and the weaving; she also did the cutting and sewing of garments. The itinerant shoemaker went his annual round. The representatives of our present vast machine shops and foundries were nothing but cross road smithies. The rural surveyor was the sole civil engineer of the day. The draughtsman and the architect, with their working drawings, had scarcely made their appearance.

But not only were the occupations of the country few in number, they were rude in character. The cultivation of the soil called for little more than muscular strength and persistent activity. The textile fabrics that came from the hands of the housewife, the products of the shoemaker, blacksmith, potter, wagon-maker, carpenter, could only boast of rough strength and durability. There were no marks of skill or taste. The day of the skilled mechanic and art workman had not arrived. Life was indeed simple in those days, and a simple education was enough to qualify for the ordinary avocations.

In sixty years what a change has come over the face of things! The use of labor-saving machinery and the practical applications of science have made it unnecessary for so large a part of the people to engage in the production of food. Every year muscle counts for less