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Editorial

Putting Manitoba on the Map

The Province is on the map territorially at least. For years it was known as the postage stamp, but now in extent it compares favorably with the sister provinces and with the greater states of the Union. As to natural wealth, Manitoba has boundless possibilities. It has water power, fertile soil, forest belts, undeveloped mines, and once upon a time it had great fisheries. It has a bracing climate, it is comparatively free from malaria, it lends itself readily to settlement.

In its history it has had a few experiences that have given it a name among the nations. It has been the scene of a rebellion, it has had a school question to settle and unsettle, it has made a record in frenzied finance. On the other hand, to its credit, it has produced heroes in war, a few giants in finance and trade, and one or two people of outstanding intellectual attainment.

Yet all this is wide of the mark. Manitoba will be truly on the map only when it is known far and wide as the home of an intelligent, industrious and God-fearing people, united and happy. The agency on which we must chiefly depend to attain such a high purpose is the public school.

Nor will it do for the school to aim at anything less than this. There are those who think otherwise. There are even parents who would offer their children on the altar of Mammon, and teachers who would subordinate character and conduct to parrot repetition and passive obedience. The real teacher has before him the thought of a country rich in great souls, all working harmoniously towards noble ends. There are, therefore, no social, political nor religious problems that are not to be worked out in the school-room. It is

not that these problems will be mentioned in the class-room, though they will none the less be met with and partially overcome. For instance, there is the problem of labor and capital. At bottom the differences are owing to injustice, selfishness, and wrong judgment. It may be assumed that there is wrong on both sides. Now whenever the school practises fair dealing, encourages thoughtful, kindly action, and when it emphasizes friendly co-operation in work and play, it is working towards a condition that will make for peace and harmony in the business world. So, too, if vice is rampant, the school can make purity in thought and deed so common, can make living together such a wholesome and holy experience, that society need have no fears and no regrets.

After all, the chief work of a school is not causing pupils to know, but causing them to live rightly—perhaps, more properly, it should be said that its mission is to cause pupils to know and feel and think in order that they may live. Is it true that much of the knowledge imparted is of no value for life—directly or indirectly—and is it true that there is much knowledge that should be given which would be of the highest value for life, but which is not imparted because tradition and custom have put emphasis on the unessentials?

The attacks that are being made on the formalism of education are not without reason, but the remedy for formalism is not the banishment from school of the truly spiritual and the introduction of the grossly practical. The great need of Manitoba now and in the future is a population of men and women known above everything else for their high moral quality. If they have this all other things will be added.