

Some Phases of the Educational Situation in Alberta

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[This is part of an address delivered before the Alberta Teachers' Association. After speaking of the rapid expansion taking place in the province, of the increase of urban population, of the foreign immigration, the varied industries, and the optimism of the people, Dr. Scott made the following suggestions.—EDITOR.]

LET it be assumed, first of all, that the business of all education is to train for citizenship and for a type of citizenship which regards productive work for the common good as the highest expression of human life. Then it becomes the duty of the schools and school systems not merely to teach every boy and girl to read, write, calculate, and have some rudimentary conception of behaviour, but also to prepare them for life by teaching them to look upon work as the natural and desirable thing in life, and the thing which will lead to the most genuine happiness and enjoyment. What a delightful world this would be if every man in it had some useful work to do and enjoyed doing it!

My *first suggestion* is for a widening of our sympathy with the foreign-born inhabitants, struggling to make new homes in Canada and forming new ties of friendship and attachment for their adopted country. Instead of objects of derision or contempt to whom such opprobrious epithets as chink, dago, dirty foreigners, etc., are too often applied, can we not rather see in them fellow creatures, industrious, ambitious and eager to learn, whose part in the future development of Canada will depend very much upon the treatment they receive at our hands? Many of them have courage far beyond our own. Think of a young man brought up in comparative luxury in a Russian city, receiving a good High School training there, driven out by persecution, forced to help support the family on arriving in Canada, spending his first winter digging in the sewer and continuing to earn money and learn English as he could, after two or three years presenting himself at High School as a student for matriculation, after which he entered the University of Alberta as an engineering student. Many Canadian students have shown pluck and endurance, but how many of us could equal such a record if driven by circumstances to begin afresh in France or Germany, or some other country?

Many instances might be cited to show the calibre of foreign-born students in our public and high schools, and to indicate the leading positions which their industry and ability will one day gain for them in professional and commercial life.