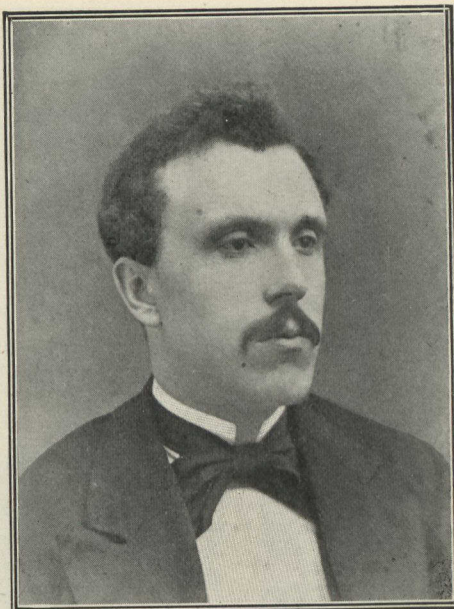


Young Mackay, however, early began to investigate things for himself. His taste led him towards matters scientific. Thus at various times during his boyhood, in the moments he was able to spare from the school and the farm, he made different scientific instruments from plans of his own. They were constructed upon purely deductive principles—he had small opportunity of inspecting models—but the important point was that they did what was intended. Again, his love for natural history led him to explore the resources of the pretty little glen which cut through the farm property. An outcome of this may be seen in the very excellent and practical suggestions to teachers for Local “Nature” Observations which to-day appear in the *Nova Scotia Journal of Education*.

It was not strange that a youth of this earnest and studious type should attract the attention of the Trustees of that school section. These gentlemen pressed the lad of seventeen to take charge of the local school. He did so, though without special training, and made a success of his work. It may easily be imagined that his thoughts soon took a more ambitious turn. In 1866 he graduated from the Provincial Normal School at Truro. Two years later he passed through the Pictou Academy. He received his B.A. from Dalhousie University, Halifax, in 1873.

Then he began to reap the rewards of hard and faithful work. In the year of his graduation he was appointed principal of the Annapolis Academy. This position he relinquished a few months later for a quite unsolicited appointment to the principalship of Pictou Academy, which he held until 1889. His work here was of great value. During a portion of his incumbency he visited the chief cities of the Eastern United States, making a careful study of their educational methods and appliances. And four years after his return his labours were rewarded by the erection of a new academy building, at that time one of the finest in Canada.

The principalship of the Halifax



MR. MACKAY IN 1880

Academy in 1889 opened out a wider field. His work had won high praise from the authorities, and was known beyond merely provincial borders. He had been president of the Provincial Educational Association, and was elected first president of the Summer School of Science (1887). He was a Life Fellow of the Society of Science, Letters and Arts of London, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. It was high time to show that the prophet was not without sufficient honour in his own country. Therefore in 1891 he was made Superintendent of Education.

This post is the most important in the whole educational structure. The Superintendent is practically head of the free school system of Nova Scotia. Dr. Mackay proceeded to justify his appointment by the gradual introduction of some very practical changes. Chief among them were these: The extension of the school term from a semi-yearly to a yearly period; the development of the industrial sentiment in common schools; the complete organization of the high-school system; and “the evolution of the Pro-