

*Gazette - Feb. 3, 1930*

There is a particular opportunity in the advice tendered to the graduates of Ridley College by Mr. E. W. Beatty, chairman and president of the Canadian Pacific Railway and governor of the college, at the gathering at which it was decided to form a Montreal branch of the Ridley College Old Boys Association. Mr. Beatty regretted the fact that so many young Canadians are still migrating abroad in the search of what he rightfully called a nebulous prosperity, and whilst he admitted that many United States corporations were glad to employ Canadians who had been trained in Canadian colleges and universities, nevertheless he considered it the part of prudence for young men of the Dominion to set their minds on securing and retaining positions in the Dominion. Conditions in Canada have changed wonderfully in recent years, and Mr. Beatty quite reasonably questions whether in the history of the country there has ever been before so many opportunities for graduates as there are today. They are of a kind that merit every consideration. There are more of them, no doubt, in the commercial and industrial sphere than within the professions. The exodus to which Mr. Beatty regretfully referred has been due partly to attractions sometimes offered in the shape of higher remuneration for services rendered in the United States than can be commanded here, partly to the spirit of adventure and wanderlust present in a fair proportion of youth the world over, and partly because graduates, finding that the professions for which they have been trained are overcrowded, seek in other walks abroad the success they fear is impeded in Canada by numbers.

As Canada continues to prosper, there is no reason why, in the presence of the increasing and varying opportunities it will afford, the Dominion should not be able to counteract the material temptations that hitherto have overcome so much of our native talent. If it is the spirit of adventure that inspires our youth to wander abroad, surely the Dominion is wide enough, and attractive enough to provide ample scope for the most adventurous inclinations. Canada, indeed, wants adventurers—merchant adventurers—and if Mr. Beatty's homing idea is to stimulate young men to its practical adoption, the same idea can likewise have stimulating application in the high schools and colleges. Opportunities that will lead youth on to success are to be found today in industry and commerce. If those opportunities, when taken, are to be put to the best use, we must lose some of the prejudice that has been shown in the past in favor of training students exclusively for the professions, and devote more attention to training them for commerce. This means more than teaching shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, mathematics and office methods. Commerce has been defined as first and last a question of human relationships, the dealing of men with men—with customers, employees, colleagues, competitors. It is essentially a calling which must be based upon the highest principles, and one, therefore, which calls for and is worthy of education on the highest plane. The fact has found recognition in different educational institutions in the country. Its importance was stressed some time ago by the authorities at the University of Lennoxville. Wherever education has its proper perspective, greater consideration is given today than formerly to the students' individual aptitudes and interests, and where there is a natural bent for commerce the students are encouraged to devote their gifts and powers to that end.

Commerce calls for leadership, organization, skill, energy and devotion to principles as well as to duty. In commerce, there is great scope for service to the community, and if Canada fulfills her proper destiny she will do so in large measure through that service to the community which is covered by the name of commerce. There will be ample remunerative work to occupy and retain in the country that proportion of the youth graduating from school, college and university who are fitted for the service. Parents and school authorities, then, as well as boys at school and boys who have left school, may profit through reflecting on the counsel of national wisdom that Mr. Beatty addressed to the old boys of Ridley College.