

Educational Notes

(By Spectator)

Mr. James H. Packham, B. A., has resigned the mathematical mastership of the collegiate institute, Owen Sound, Ontario, after forty years' service. Mr. Packham was not only a teacher of ability in mathematics, but one whose qualities as a Christian gentleman endeared him to many hundreds of young men and women who had the good fortune to be educated in an institution which for many years held foremost place among the secondary schools of the premier province. As a citizen Mr. Packham was always ready to lend active aid in the furtherance of a good cause, and his faithfulness as church worker, and especially as Sunday School superintendent, proved an inspiring influence to young and old. In British Columbia, as in other parts of Canada, and also in the United States, he will long be held in affectionate remembrance. On his retirement the Owen Sound school board voted him a gratuity marking their sense of the value of his labors and influence, and his former pupils have under consideration plans to express their appreciation in tangible and substantial form.

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To the economist who fain would transfer the burden of the cost of schools from the municipalities to the provincial government, Honest John has given a ready answer. The Prime Minister is sufficiently harassed by the burdens he is now staggering under, and is no mood to assume those heretofore borne legitimately and not unsuccessfully by others. Nor it is likely that he covets the administration of matters scholastic in every little district in the province, for he is shrewd enough to know that he who pays the piper calls the tune. With the passing away of local support there would also be the passing away of local management and control. The army of bureaucrats would be increased, and in all probability bureaucratic inefficiency would not be slow to show itself. And, after all, how much richer should we be? How much should we save by closing our eyes and extracting the money from the left pocket, instead of keeping them open and taking the money from the right. The Provincial Government has no miraculous means of turning a tap and causing an unending stream of golden dollars to issue forth. What it does not acquire by the sale of goodly portions of our heritage it directly or indirectly extracts from the pockets of the citizens. It may be more pleasant to be parted from one's money through an intermediary, rather than to produce it directly, but the effect is the same. Local support and local control, aided by the guiding hand and the financial contributions of the Educational department, have proved a very good system, one that has prevailed throughout Canada for generations past, one that is likely to prevail for centuries to come.

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For many centuries the people of Tyre and Sidon were the world's carriers by sea and land. They enriched themselves by trade, and with their merchandise they distributed instruments of civilization to many a land. But their light went out, and they have left only a memory to point a moral or adorn a tale.

Not so some of their pupil states. The Jew, the keenest of traffickers, has bestowed on the world the priceless gift of the sacred scriptures and Christianity itself. The Greek, an adventurous trader and colonizer, has left us a literature, a philosophy, art and architecture that in many respects the modern world has not surpassed, or even measured up to.

With these nations commerce and manufacture have been, not an end, but a means. In our own day the rich civilization

of the British Isles has been conditioned on manufacture and trade.

Vancouver promises to become, in the not distant future, one of the world's greatest trading centres. Manufacture will follow quickly on the heels of trade. The riches of East and West will be found piled up in the capacious warehouses lining her docks. But will Vancouver be the child of Tyre, or rather the child of Palestine and Greece?

The omens are favorable. The current has begun to flow in the right direction. To Mrs. Rounsefell the children of Vancouver owe the gift of a splendid playground. The memory of the late Mr. Braid will be kept bright by his solicitude for the welfare of the blind. The bounty of the new proprietors of the "Province" newspaper has transformed Victory Square, changing it in two short months from an eyesore to a thing of beauty, refreshing alike to body and mind. Lieutenant Governor Nichol, formerly proprietor of the same paper, has given a large sum of money to provide scholarships to enable bright graduates of our Provincial university to proceed to France, to make a study of French speech, French literature, French institutions, with a view to cultivating a spirit of mutual understanding and friendship that shall make for the progress and peace of the world. And now comes the princely gift of the Capilano canyons and their romantic banks from the British Columbia Electric Railway Company to the people of Vancouver, in order that to the end of time the young and the old of the great city may feel the peace and beauty of romantic Nature, and experience the power of restoration to wearied body and jaded spirit. With such manifestations of altruism conditioned on business prosperity our rosy-fingered morning promises us in due time the fullest blaze of noonday.

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Again the British Association for the Advancement of Science has met in Canada, and again the intellectual life of Canada has been brought into closest touch with the very latest scientific knowledge and achievement, and has felt the inspiration which comes from personal contact alone.

In the deliberations of this great society Canada was not a silent partner. Men like Dr. Banting, discoverer of insulin, came bearing gifts.

But even Homer nods. This will almost inevitably happen if Homer forgets himself, steps out of his own proper sphere, and there essays the oracle. Some members of the Association, even before reaching the Middle West, had arrived at the conclusion that the Fathers of Confederation were idle dreamers, that Confederation was a web of gossamer. Geography had decreed that the great Dominion, extending from Sea to Sea, and from the St. Lawrence to the Pole, must break up into a number of separate states more or less insignificant and impotent.

These wise men have evidently forgotten for the moment that matter is subordinate to mind, that apart from mind it has no existence, that it is merely a manifestation of mind. The dominating mind of Canada has already gone far to conquer Geography. East and West are bound together by bands of steel. The steamship, the airship, the automobile, the telephone, the telegraph, wireless telegraphy, the radio,—each contributes to the tightening of the bond. Greatest of all is the directly human contribution,—commerce, religion, the ties of blood, the peopling of the great waste places. If the distant and diverse parts of Canada cannot be knit together by bonds like these, then farewell to the British Empire itself.