

# Debating Clubs

## A Good Education the Important Thing

"The most valuable of all our natural resources are those that can be developed in the mind."

To see that every boy and every girl receives a good working education before leaving school should be the ambition of every patriotic Canadian citizen.

Unfortunately, from necessity or other causes, many leave school too soon, and for these some provision for further training should be made. In the city the night school has opened and is well patronized, but in the towns and rural districts the young people are not so fortunate in this respect. These must open their own evening schools.

## Value of the Debating Club

One of the best organizations for mutual improvement and preparation for the highest functions of citizenship is the Debating Club. This, of course, is true only if the club is properly managed. If the young people of the neighborhood meet from week to week, and their meetings are characterized by rowdy and boisterous conduct, or even indifference, then the Club should be abandoned. But if the members come together to improve their education and to fit themselves for a greater service to their community, the Club will be a real training school. It must not be otherwise. In the first place, the trustee board will refuse the use of the school buildings, or the town council the hall, because they must see to the safety of public property. In the second place, to allow young people to come to these meetings and engage in even minor disturbances and show lack of interest and inattention, is a direct training in lawlessness and disregard for the rights of others. It must be understood from the outset that all are either members of the Club and, therefore, mutually responsible for the well-being of the Club, or are there by invitation of the members, and as guests will know how to deport themselves.

This word of warning may not be necessary, but if we are to err at all it is better to err on the side of over caution. Every meeting must be primarily a training in self-government and good citizenship.

## Importance of Public Speaking

The importance of debating clubs and public speaking generally will be admitted. In the first place, it is not given the emphasis in our schools and colleges that it deserves; like agriculture, it has been neglected. In the second place, any one who belongs to a debating society and takes part in its debates and discussions must do considerable reading and study if he is to make a success of it from his own standpoint. And, in the third place, we all know what added power and influence a man can wield who is capable of taking the public platform or standing on the floor of the house and addressing a forceful, earnest message of inspiration and helpfulness to his fellow citizens or to members of parliament. But,