

THE MACDONALD MOVEMENT FOR RURAL EDUCATION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

COMMITTEE ROOM No. 34,

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, April 3, 1907.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization met here this day at 10 a.m., Mr. McKenzie, Chairman, presiding.

Dr. James W. Robertson, Principal of the Macdonald College, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, attended by request of the Committee and made the following statement:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I am very much obliged to this Committee for the opportunity of laying before its members some information regarding the Macdonald College, and what has become known in Canada as the Macdonald Movement for the advancement of agriculture and education. Many of us look for much benefit from them to the whole of Canada. I gratefully recognize that in the past, when I had the honour and privilege of being Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying for the Dominion, this Committee gave me many opportunities in its meetings and in its reports of laying before the people of Canada some of the plans which the Department of Agriculture had under consideration for the promotion of agriculture; and I am venturing to hope that the Committee will let me, in my new capacity as Director of the Macdonald Movement and the Macdonald College, continue in the same friendly relationship.

SOME PROBLEMS AND EXPERIMENTS.

Some of the problems which we Canadians have to face and solve for ourselves are common to all self-governing nations, but others of them are peculiar to us. For instance, there are special national problems due to our youth; to our size; to the character, vastness and potential values of our undeveloped resources; and to the large amount of foreign blood pouring into our citizenship. The large inflow of foreigners who come to mix with our people adds difficulties to the ordinary problems of agriculture and of education. These people bring in not merely different methods of doing things but different social standards and ideals. The traditions they have inherited, the conditions under which they have been brought up, their outlook on life, these are all different from ours. For our safety and their welfare it is necessary that these people should be so educated, so led and so guided by competent leaders that they will be inclined to live on the land, and not to herd in the cities; that they will be able to live on the land with profit and contentment to themselves and thus join our own people in making our civilization progressive and wholesome for the whole of us.

To help in the solution of some of the problems arising from those conditions is part of the work for which the Macdonald College has been founded and endowed by Sir William C. Macdonald, of Montreal. We are all making experiments; we are doing that to the extent to which we live in a way that is consciously rational, trying to do the best we can with ourselves and the conditions in which we find ourselves. We are trustees of life, and of the institutions and national honour of Canada, as