PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA

PICTOU ACADEMY'S CENTENARY CELEBRATION A GRAND SUCCESS

Leaders in the Intellectual Life of Canada and the States Gather to Do Honor to Their Alma Mater. A Glorious Past A More Glorious Future. Bursary Fund over $8,000.

(Continued from Page One.)

many of his old classmates and friends. They were proud of his high distinction in the academic world and delighted with the vigor of his eloquence.

"Let Pictou," he said amid applause, "continue to be the home of ideals and the maker of men. Don't run after false gods; build up Pictou academy."

Speech of Dr. Ross Hill.

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After reminiscences of the period in the life of town and academy, the following points of special reference to the work of Pictou academy were emphasized by Dr. Hill:

1. The students were—(1) Cosmopolitan in character, ranging in age and experience from the youths of both gentle breeding and humble homes in the town and county of Pictou to the experienced rural school teachers of the entire province, and they came from every county in the province and every province of the dominion, from Bermuda and Trinidad. This took away that provincial attitude so characteristic of most institutions of its type and gave to Pictou academy something of the same character as belongs to the great public (so called) schools of England (Rugby, Eton, etc.,) that have turned out men with imperial vision, who have controlled the destinies of the British empire.

Devotion to Work.

2. They were earnest and serious. While they have always had their sports and their fun, their marked characteristic has been their devotion to work. Having crossed county and even provincial lines to secure the benefits of this academy, they have always been here "for business," and have given a character of earnestness and seriousness to the work of this academy that made it unique among institutions of its class.

3. They have been in the main limited in resources and thus the academy has always been extremely democratic in its life. Both student and faculty have awarded their honors on the basis of intellectual and moral worth. The present movement to establish bursaries for deserving graduates is to be highly commended as tending to draw to Pictou able but financially poor students from this and other sections of the country.

4. The students, being the cream of the province, have been an unusually able lot intellectually and of high moral tone. In the days of exhibitions and bursaries at Dalhousie university we did not often permit more than one a year to be won by graduates of other academies, though we had to grant a few to Prince of Wales college men.

The Teachers and the Teaching.

1. The teaching was remarkably free from coddling, in keeping with the character of the students. The teachers of Pictou academy may not have been regular in attendance at summer schools of method, but they "had the goods to deliver," as they say in the States, and the students were ready to expand. We had real problems to solve and in the solution of problems is developed those powers of mind that enable the person afterward to face new situations and think for himself.

2. The instruction was thorough, rather than varied and extensive. It tended to give grasp of fundamentals rather than a smattering of many things. Pictou academy has trained its students to drink at the fountain of knowledge instead of contenting themselves with tapping only the lower courses of the streams.

Practical as Well as Ideal.

3. Yet the instruction was practical as well as ideal. Visits to the gas works by the class in chemistry, etc., tended to relate instruction to everyday life, and vitalize theory. It might be claimed that this was more practical in the long run than present day vocational instruction in narrow practical lines.

4. Perhaps most significant of all, the instruction in all classes, but particularly in those of the principal (A. H. Mackay), inspired to further study and practically all graduates have attended some higher educational institution. Even when the principal soared beyond our heads and tried to lead us to scientific principals below our depths, he was for us a sort of spy who had gone ahead to spy out the land of knowledge and what he brought back were great rich clusters of grapes as evidence to us of the wealth of the land of milk and honey that lay beyond the Jordan of our mysteries.

It is the function of an educational institution of this type to graduate men and women whose judgments have been sobered by the lessons of the past and by the method and spirit of modern science; who have intellectual toleration and social sympathy; who have insight, power of intellectual analysis, and capacity for devotion to great causes. This function Pictou academy has performed in a manner to give it a recognition which is national and international.

Pictou academy can, therefore, never die. It lives in lives enriched, enobled, and blessed; it lives in high thoughts and aspirations and ideals but air men's minds and rouse their souls to nobler and vaster issues; it lives in improved conditions of education and society, in the Kingdom of Heaven brought to dwell among men, the result of the work of its former students. Not only our alumni and former students, but all friends of education can today cordially join in congratulating Pictou academy on the contribution it has made to the civilization of this province and of the entire dominion in its onward triumphant march.

The Hope of the Future.

A great responsibility rests upon Pictonians of the present and future. Those of us who from far and near have not only come to celebrate this occasion but have contributed to the new bursary fund, expect the people here to rise to the occasion, to support the academy in a manner that will enable it to preserve its character as a provincial and even a national institution. Pictou will probably never become a great industrial centre, but it can remain the home of ideas and the mother of men by generous support of this academy, as she now girds herself afresh for the tasks that lie before her.

After the singing of that old hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past," President Mackenzie delivered an interesting and beautiful address. He said:

Founders of the Institution.

On the occasion of a celebration of this kind one naturally thinks of the great men who were instrumental in founding Pictou academy, and of the great fight which surrounded its early days, and of the men whom it has sent out into the world to add to its fame. I must leave this historical side of the theme which has drawn us all together to those who are more capable than I of doing justice to it. But I think it might not be out of place to consider what were the causes that lay deep at the root of the reason for the foundation of this institution, and what it has meant to the life of the people who gave it birth. And in thinking of Pictou county as a Scottish people and of Pictou academy as the product of Scottish genius, I do not believe I will hurt the susceptibilities of those Pictonians who have not had the privilege of being born Scots—it is surely a great enough privilege for them to have been born in Pictou county without needing to add any extra glory to it.

One has but to dip into Patterson's history of the first immigrants to the county, or to read any account of our early settlers, to realize that they were not as a rule people who were themselves educated, or who at the outset set any high value upon education. But deep down in their nature was a desire unknown to themselves, which only needed the proper conditions for great growth. They had come from homes where life was a hard struggle for bare existence, and from an unequal fight with an unfriendly soil. They could not own land; education was a thing almost beyond their horizon. But like most things beyond one's grasp, it was only the more desirable, and the more alluring as it seemed to evade attainment, and I doubt whether it is fair to say that our forbears set no store by education; rather would I put it that an immediate provision for educational facilities did not early enter into their calculations, as did that for religious ministrations, because the one was foreign, the other familiar, to their experience.

A Veritable Eldorado.

The prospect of coming to a country with its seductive offer of the actual ownership of land, and not of a few acres but of scores of acres, drew the sturdy, ambitious tenant and peasant to such a veritable Eldorado. His hopes were high, his disappointment and surprise were correspondingly great, when he found his heritage covered with virgin giant forests which his imagination had not even dreamed of, instead of the broad arable acres he had pictured in his mind's eye. What was education in such a condition? Undaunted, he conquered the forests and the inclement winters, and at last found himself in relatively comfortable circumstances, with an assured living from the soil, and a sense of proprietorship that made life so different from what was even conceivable at home that his nature rose to his capabilities. It was then he began to realize that it was in his power to give his children what for him had been an utter impossibility—an education. To himself probably the three R's had been a sealed book. It was not difficult now to make him believe that nothing that man could learn was necessarily beyond acquisition by his children.

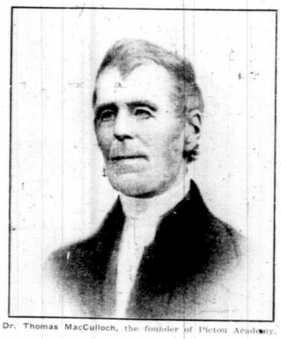
Again, it must be conceded that the Scots as a race were a people of great natural mental activity; that is, in the proper sense of the word, were intellectual. Whatever native wit they were endowed with, and whether that gray matter was trained or untrained in the schools, the Scot loved to exercise it, and delighted in measuring it against that of his neighbors. No proof of this is needed further than to recall their love of argument, their unwillingness to agree with one another, even on the state of the weather. Perhaps in no direction did this characteristic show itself more than in their love of disputation over points of doctrine—and it was the disputation of thinking men, not mere words—and it was often the disputation of what we must call the illiterate. Such men must of necessity have longed for the greatest armament of dialectics—education.

Power of the Scot.

Another most important element in the determination of the Scottish portion of Nova Scotia to provide the fullest facilities for a good education was the peculiar situation with regard to education in Nova Scotia a century ago, which called out every obstinate opposition of which his stern nature is capable against what he deems injustice. With the hard-earned means in his grasp, he found that to get it he must subscribe to the 39 articles—a most intolerable thing, and one which his fathers had fought against and won, generations before. Embittered by this manifest injustice he became all the more determined to secure this blessing of education withheld from him, and the desire for it became rather a passion; and for several generations he did not hesitate to make the greatest sacrifice to secure it for his children. It often meant half a life-time of saving to send a boy to college, and that made it all the more a precious thing. As a result, when the boy went to college there was no idling; he got all his hard-earned money would buy; he drained his professors dry; what could be learned and absorbed in the time, he got; no moment was lost. He emerged a scholar, a thinker and a doer, master of his subject, and with his powers of intellectual industry trained to the fighting point. Hence the Sir William Dawsons, the George M. Grants, and their tribe. Self-reliance was the product of industry and of mastery of the subject, and aggressiveness was the dower of the Scot.

The True Scot.

Still another element in the situation—the true Scot is ever ambitious; keen imagination and vision were ever his birthright. Combined with a less steady and virile nature these might have led him to be a dreamer; but added to the restless and resistless energy of the Highlander, they led to calculating ambition. He perceived that learning opened the gates to conquest of men and things—and learning therefore he must have.



Dr. Thomas MacCulloch, the founder of Pictou Academy.

Last, but not least, was the deeply religious nature of the Scotsman. The desire of every Scotch mother to give at least one son to the church was a beautiful thing, a secret desire that lay next to her heart from the moment her first-born son lay on her breast. Dear were the sacrifices which she would make, and the privations she would bear, in order that the little board might be started that would put the boy through college; and prouder than Solomon was she when she walked with him to his first sermon in the home church with gown and bands.

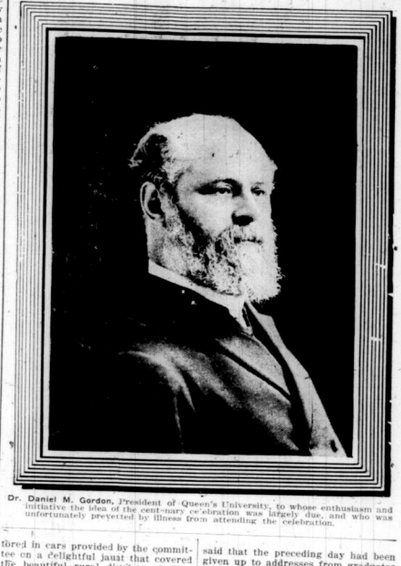
These are some of the elements that went to make this Pictou academy a power in the land, and a pride from one generation to another. These are, too, some of the real elements of power and greatness; and it is right that we should gather to proclaim the fact that we of this county have possessed them. Much of this is true of other parts of the province besides Pictou, and in particular I would include Cape Breton, and of other elements of the people besides the Scotch; but I hope I need not apologize.

Nova Scotia Has Gained.

There is one other aspect of this question of education that I wish to touch upon before I sit down. One has frequently to meet the objection to higher education that it means the training of our best intellects to be lost to us, that we train them only to send them out of the country or the province, as we offer no scope for their ambitions and highly developed powers. We who have to appeal for money from those who have it to give, in order that our colleges may be supported, know this counterblast only too well. No view is perhaps more superficial. How completely do they miss the essence of the blessing of an educational centre. It is an old simile to liken learning to a torch or a lamp or the sun; and just as the purely physical source of illumination, though perhaps lighted for the specific use of one individual, sends out its beneficent beams in to the infinity of space in all directions, never to return to that source, but brightening all things in their path, so the lamp of learning radiates its rays of blessing not only upon those for whom it is primarily lighted, but all in its neighborhood feel its presence, even if they are not consciously utilizing the stray beams. I would like to press this point. This county has not lost because the products of the labors of many of the most brilliant graduates of this academy have been lost to the county, or to the province, or even to the dominion. Far outweighing this loss has been the aggregate gain to the whole people by the possession in their midst of such an institution. I do not speak of their reflected glory, for that is a barren thing unless their greatness acts as a stimulus—which it undoubtedly does. I mean a very direct gain. Firstly, because the facilities for education which developed the native genius of these great sons and enabled them to rise, is also the great boon of every commonplace John and William and George of the community, and his powers are correspondingly enriched. And secondly, I have in mind that very intangible, but very beneficient, influence which the presence of a seat of learning has upon those within its sphere. It is a spiritual and enlightening and uplifting influence which is forever pointing to higher things; its everlasting, even if unassuming, pressure is ever away from the base and the sordid and the ephemeral, and unperceptibly drives to the higher and the beautiful and the real. In physics we have a principle that a steady force however small, acting upon a mass, however big, will in time produce in it any motion we specify, however great. So it is with the spirit of true learning. With higher aspirations and loftier ideals come those spiritual blessings which give character and moral fibre to a people. Measured in these terms what has the county gained to offset the loss of individuals? An infinity of benefits. The thought I would wish to leave with you is not that Pictou academy has turned out great men; it has—lots of them—an unusually great lot of them; but that the beneficence of its existence here has been a spiritual influence and a blessing to corresponding thousands, whose integral good far outweighs any loss, measure it how you will.

Dr. A. H. Mackay's Address.

Dr. A. H. MacKay, for so many years the distinguished principal of the academy, gave the closing address. He reviewed the history of the institution and the lines and work of the great men who had been associated with it as founders, teachers, and pupils, McCulloch and MacGregor left influence on the whole life of the province. Their course of study was the basis of the present course of study. He referred to his own connections with the academy and paid high tribute to Dr. Maclellan. Pictou stood



Dr. Daniel M. Gordon, President of Queen's University, to whose enthusiasm and initiative the idea of the centenary celebration was largely due, and who was unfortunately prevented by illness from attending the celebration.

tired in cars provided by the committee on a delightful jaunt that covered the beautiful rural districts of Durham and Green Hill. From the summit of this famous mountain there stretched a magnificent panorama of sea and landscape, smiling valeys, beautiful inverals adorned with graceful elms. Then they motored twenty-five or thirty miles past well tiled farms over excellent roads and through scenes of country life which everywhere betokened a happy and prosperous land. It is a fair country on this West River of Pictou, good to look upon, fertile and productive and rich in historic associations. At Durham they visited the site of the first Presbyterian college, founded by Dr. McCulloch, in which had been trained many of the ministers of Pictou county.

This afternoon the real historical gathering was held on the academy grounds. It was made notable by addresses from Rev. Dr. John Forrest and Rev. Dr. Allan Pollok, who gave to the centenary its true historical perspective, and by eloquent addresses by Rev. Dr. Boyle and Rev. Dr. Connolly, who brought messages of congratulation and good wishes from Kings college and St. Francis Xavier university.

Met on Academy Campus.

Mr. E. M. MacDonald, M. P., who was asked by Dr. Maclellan to preside at the meeting on the academy campus, said that the preceding day had been given up to addresses from graduates of the academy and others who had gone out from the county of Pictou to win distinction. They were all proud of the marvellous galaxy of men whom Pictou academy had given to the life of the dominion—Dawson, Grant, and Gordon. Dr. Gordon's absence was deeply regretted by all. They were proud of Dr. Ross Hill, who has carried the name and fame of Pictou to the great country adjoining our own, where he stands in the front rank of its educational and public leaders. They were glad also to welcome President Mackenzie, of Dalhousie, and Dr. A. H. Mackay, superintendent of education, under whom so many of those present had been trained. They were glad to welcome Dr. Forrest, who would unveil the tablet presented by the Nova Scotia Historical society, also the venerable and distinguished Dr. Pollok, whom Presbyterians everywhere were proud to honor. Dr. Boyle, president of Kings college, the only institution that outrivals Pictou academy in age, Dr. Connolly, of St. Francis Xavier college and a former member of the teaching staff, our good friend Mr. Humphrey Mellish, K. C.

Eulogizes the Founder.

Dr. Forrest, who spoke with fine vigor and characteristic spirit, devoted

(Continued on Page Five.)

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