

"The Possibilities of Wolfville"

Paper Read by E. Percy Brown Before the
Civic Club, Dec. 9, 1920.

If one were to climb the hill behind the College buildings on the afternoon of a clear autumn day and, resting on the brow of the hill, look northward over the buildings of the College, Seminary and Academy with the residences of the professors to the East and West and the roofs of the town buildings just visible on the edge of the dyke land, beyond which the sparkling waters of Minas Basin stretch to the deep purple bluffs of Blomidon and to the paler outlines of the Cumberland shore, he might be pardoned were he to weave a dream of the possibilities of this fair land.

However the purpose of this short paper is to present not dreams but facts and to set forth possibilities that, even if they seem too optimistic at present may yet be realized, provided that we have the vision of this future before us and work consistently in that direction.

In treating of this development, I may hurt someone's feelings but I will ask them to please remember that whatever I may have to suggest is entirely impersonal.

It is my opinion that the future of the town is inseparably bound up in the future of the College.

I have heard it said that Wolfville existed before it had a College and could do so again. Perhaps it could; but who would wish to go back to that state of existence? The interests of the College and Town for mutual benefit are identical, what benefits the one must benefit the other and vice-versa. The College has always shown its willingness to do its part towards co-operation and what I will venture to call the better class of Wolfville citizens will do the same.

To my mind we cannot consider any development of Wolfville apart from the development of the College and in the following notes I have taken for granted that this spirit of co-operation exists between the two. One or two events that have happened lately must have impressed this upon many of our citizens.

I refer, firstly, to Armistice Day, when the College Band, formed in large part of our own young men, led a procession composed of Wolfville's future citizens and some of those men who, through the trying years of the war, so ably defended our homes against the ravages of the would-be invader; when a College Professor presided over a gathering of the citizens of the town, and another College Professor gave an address that long will be remembered by those present.

Secondly, I refer to Miss Vaughan's lecture in College Hall, when the College and Town were so prominently represented. It is to be noted that on this occasion

the College and Seminary students for the most part occupied the galleries, while the main portion of the hall was reserved for citizens of Wolfville, and a lady member of our Town Council ably presided. Remember, this was College Hall (and may the new College Hall witness many such scenes). Is this not a spirit to be fostered? Anyone who looked over the audience, and heard the remarks of the Chairman, the singing of the Students and the music of the band and orchestra must have been blind indeed if they did not see great possibilities both to Wolfville and to the College as the significance of such a gathering.

In my opinion the future of Wolfville consists in realizing its possibilities as an ideal residential town.

It may do some manufacturing and as a centre of an important agricultural district, do considerable shipping, but I believe there will never be enough of either to put Wolfville "on the map." Remembering therefore that our ideal should be to make out town an ideal residential one, I will endeavor to treat the subject of its possibilities under four heads as follows:

- 1.—Intellectually
- 2.—Physically
- 3.—Devotionally
- 4.—Socially

1. Intellectually. We have in our town a combined Common or Grammar School and a High School, which though crowded beyond its capacity, is doing good work. This year in particular I believe that the staff is better than for some years past. However here is a situation that must be met. What are the possibilities? Let us remember that the function of the Common School (grades 1 to 8), is to provide an education fitting the boy or girl for every day life, while that of the High School is primarily to enable the student to enter College. Less than ten per cent of the total number of children who enter school pass into the High School.

At present we are giving this small percentage the most attention the best rooms and equipment and the highest paid teachers. As one of the best authorities on school matters in our County said to me, "We are fertilizing the branches rather than the roots of the tree." It surely seems hardly fair to tax the people as a whole for the education of this minority. Let us make our Common School an ideal one, with special attention to the lower grades and a principal who will have time to supervise not only the work of the school but the play of the boys and a lady vice-principal who in addition to teaching, will supervise the play of the girls.

Let the Town enter into an agreement with the College authorities so that the work of grades 9, 10 and 11 may be carried on at the Academy and Seminary.

Many of those to whom I have mentioned this, have objected, saying that these institutions would not meet the provincial requirements; however, I am quite sure that this matter can readily be arranged to the mutual benefit of the Town and College.

Considering the education of those of more mature years, we have the great advantage of an institution in our midst where our young men and women may prepare for professional life without leaving home and where all those who wish may attend educational lectures and thus keep themselves up-to-date, in any subject, whether it be music, art or poetry.

2. Physically. The importance of this side of civic life may be doubted by some, but let me assure you that it is now recognized that the whole moral tone of a community may be developed by properly organized and supervised games.

Let us look back at the ancient Greeks and their Olympic Games. Known for ages to have had so marked an effect on the moral life of the nation. The contestants in the games, if I may explain, were continually in training and were obliged to lead moral lives, and, as great numbers took part, the salutary effect of them was widely felt.

With medical inspection and the constant attention of a nurse, with play for both boys and girls in our schools carefully supervised, we will start our children well on the road of life. Apart from school hours such organizations as the Girl Guides, Boy Scouts and Tuxis Scouts should provide a healthful outlet for youthful activities and place ideals of clean sport and its attendant virtues before our growing girls and boys.

School sports such as were held in Wolfville and Canning at the time of the School Exhibition last year will be very valuable, due to the fact that all take part and a healthy rivalry and a desire to win for the sake of winning rather than for the sake of a prize is encouraged. These sports will be made still more interesting when we take the winners from each school and have a grand field day between all the schools in the County.

The value of training the boys in team games may be shown in a small way in our town when we consider the showing that our boys have made during the past two years in the back line of a football team and in hockey. From this it will appear that perhaps the systematic playing of these team games as carried out as part of the Scout work under the competent direction of the best Athletes of the College may be producing its effect. At this point it may not be out of place to note one or two of the benefits our Town is deriving from co-operation with the College. At the present time a committee of 25 College men is taking hold of the Scout work on Friday evenings. This com-

mittee consists of a chairman, who is responsible for the attendance of the members and 8 groups of 3 each, who in conjunction with myself carry out a definite program each week.

This is but the commencement of a scheme which should be mutually beneficial and will be enlarged upon each year. Another benefit of this co-operation of the College and Town was noticed last year in connection with the formation of the Wolfville Amateur Athletic Association. In my opinion, the success of the Association will depend upon its ability to act in an official capacity for the Town in all negotiations for the use of the Campus, and no indiscriminate use of the Campus should be allowed by any townspeople.

The improvement in the character of the sport carried out in Wolfville last year due to the activities of this Association was very marked when compared with the preceding year.

What has been said of the Campus may also be said of the Rink and perhaps some day of the Memorial Gymnasium as the Wolfville Amateur Athletic Association proves itself capable of acting for the Town in a manner acceptable to the College authorities.

3. Devotionally. Perhaps it is too much to hope for in our generation but I feel certain that the day will come when we will have one Union Church in our Town. One able Minister with one or more active assistants, well paid and carefully selected will attend to the spiritual needs of the community. We will then avoid all this wasteful overlapping and other drawbacks that must face anyone who thoughtfully considers our present system.

However, to me a Union Sunday School is even more desirable than a Union church. What a great institution such could be. I realize that in our town the Baptists are almost able to carry this out but there

are just enough of other denominations to spoil its completeness. The natural groups of boys, those chaps who are together all week, must be broken up on Sunday. This seems unreasonable to the boy (as of course it really is) and herewith he registers his first objection to Sunday School.

With one Sunday School we will be able to organize each natural group of boys as a unit and during the week carry on team games and other activities between these groups thus founding an esprit-de corps that can never be attained otherwise.

In this way, and in this way only, can we carry the work of the Sunday School into the week and make religion not merely a Sunday affair, as it now too often is, but one for every day use.

4. Socially. In what is usually known as the Social side, Wolfville is today in many ways admirable. The people are friendly and sociable with an absence of those petty class distinctions that are found in so many of our small residential towns. However in dealing with this portion of my subject I wish to go farther than this phase of the matter. Many questions that will be considered by people coming here to reside may be discussed under this heading.

Lighting is one that may be said to be in a fair way to a very satisfactory solution. The present season has been an unusually dry one, but with increased storage facilities it is probable that the present company will be able to meet even such a situation.

The use of electrical power is but in its infancy. All of us using it for light, some for such purposes as irons, toasters, vacuum-cleaners, washing machines and other power while a few are using it for actually heating their rooms. It is a fortunate thing that during the season

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