

Sussex, N. B.
June 25/34.

It gives me great pleasure to come to New Brunswick. In the first place because we in Dalhousie University get some of our best students from this province - e. g. a New Brunswicker tied for the gold medal in the Faculty of Medicine this year. And also, for personal reasons. Wherever I go in New Brunswick I meet with the most hospitable reception, - in Fredericton, in Saint John, in Moncton, last year at this time in Rothesay, and at other times in Chatham, Sackville, and elsewhere. And I must say to you at this point that we in Dalhousie University think that our Board of Governors has much distinction lent to it by the two eminent New Brunswickers who are members of it: Premier Bennett, and Dr. J. C. Webster, who has recently joined us.

It is surely a sign that you in Sussex value the things of the mind and the things of the spirit when so many of you will come, this charming

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summer evening, when everything out of doors invites you elsewhere, to listen to a toast to Education in the abstract. Education was once called the dullest of all dull subjects. But evidently you do not find it dull, nor does the proposer of the toast find it dull, nor abstract, nor aloof from the major interests of life. The fact is that education is the most difficult and complicated task to which a man or a community can undertake. In a way it is like gardening. It needs a long and careful preparation of public opinion, which is the soil in which a good school grows. Then the school, like the garden, needs to be fenced, - to keep out the wild beasts of misguided ambition, the wolves of commercialism, and the tigers of self-seeking. And after it is fenced, the weeds will still spring up, and many of the seeds that are planted will prove disappointing. And even if the most

skilful gardener be discovered and hired to tend the plot, the crop may still be ruined by an untoward season, and the best laid plans of a school board may be blighted by a depression.

But, my friends, does not all this merely mean that education is both as difficult and as fascinating as life itself? Her is it an accident that all the great and original thinkers for the last 2500 years have found it impossible to talk of schools without talking of society in general. So much for the theory of the thing. What about the historical facts? The historical fact would seem to be that when schools are neglected society in general suffers.

Let me give you a concrete example. Economics.

And now may I say something about the whole question of education, with a particular reference to the Maritime Provinces?

We live in a troubled, uneasy world. Only a fool would try to blind himself to that. In ages like ours, after a shattering war, and while other wars impend and threaten, civilisation has more than once, in the brief historic period known to us, sunk and disappeared, like a proud ship that suddenly staggers and is lost to view. That may happen to us again, and in fifty or a hundred years no one will ask about our modern universities, with more curiosity than one inquires of the temple of Paestum, or the ruins of Babylon. That may be, and it is a chastening thought.

Or again, something quite different may happen. A new hope may be born of our despair. A new sanity may steal over us. A fresh spirit,

with healing in its wings, may brush our minds and thoughts, and touch the hearts of all mankind. After much travel over our continent, I believe that there is more likelihood of the birth of a prophet, in our Canadian Atlantic provinces than elsewhere. If new institutions are to arise, or if the old ones are to continue, they must inevitably be based on a new order of things in the hearts of men. And I say, deliberately, that I am more hopeful of the human material in our Maritime Provinces than of any other I know. I read, some time ago, the recently published life of Dorothy Wordsworth. In a troubled world, and in a seemingly leaderless generation, she and her brother made a new life, first of all in their own two hearts, and then in a growing circle. Ultimately the influence of Dove Cottage gave the whole world a new sense of values, and was more potent than the Congress of Vienna. If we who are interested in

education will keep our eye on the main purpose, we may cherish high hopes, and fortify ourselves and those in our charge against any malignancy of fortune.

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