

JUNE 23 - 1917

SCHOOL CLOSING

The Governor spoke in substance as follows:

The seasons come and go very fast. It does not seem like six months since I talked to you at Christmas time, nor like a year since your last closing exercises. Perhaps it seems longer to you.

And what have you accomplished in this time? Your exercises just finished show that you have been industrious. They also show the effect of careful training on the part of your teachers. All of these, from the Head of Department and the Superintendent down to the newest teacher, have your interests at heart. Your thanks are due to them.

Again I ask you to think for a moment on the object of your schooling. Book learning, while valuable, is not the main object. To learn to use your mind is more valuable still. If you have learned that at school you may continue to acquire knowledge all the rest of your lives.

Discipline also helps. It enables you to concentrate your attention. The physical training of the boys on the Plaza every afternoon is of principal value in the same direction, though it develops their bodies as well.

With regard to your actual acquirements at school, knowledge of English is of the greatest importance. The half-hourly conversations morning and afternoon are evidently having their effect. They may be lengthened if necessary. You cannot give too much attention to this accomplishment. Besides being of use to you in your daily life on the Island it opens up a vast field of literature and knowledge that will otherwise remain entirely unknown to you. Moreover English will shortly be made a requirement for all federal and Island government positions.

The other subjects you study will also prove of use to you in after life. In this connection your choice of an occupation is still to be made. Do not attach too much importance to being bookkeepers and clerks. It may seem to you an easier life with fewer hardships. But the Island needs also young men who will help her develop her material resources. The farmers and artisans will count for more than the bookkeepers and clerks.

An effort is now being made to increase the agricultural products of the Island, and with gratifying success. This means living more in the country and less in the towns. To make the Island wealthy every particle of the fertile land should be cultivated. If this is to be well done you must spend more of your time in the country. Eventually you should have churches and schools in the country, as well as in town. This matter is referred to because most of you should plan to be farmers. It will mean more to you, and more to your Island.

The Industrial Fair about to open, in the early days of next month, will give you an opportunity to inspect the best exhibits of the Island, and to realize what an advantage it would be for everybody to try and rival these best products. That is the object of the Fair. You will say that it concerns the grown people more than you; but you will be grown some day and you must be able to see clearly what is best for you and best for the Island.

But I will not keep you too long on these subjects. Your vacation is now about to begin, and I am sure you will enjoy your freedom for a few weeks, in which I wish you all pleasure and happiness.