

A TALK BY JAMES J. HILL
TO THE
CHILDREN OF CROOKSTON

SEPTEMBER 17, 1908.

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Children of Crookston:

It is an unusual pleasure for me to be here today, and I assure you that my pleasure has been greatly increased by giving me the opportunity to see those who hereafter are to be the men and women who will maintain the country. The towns were built by men, and the country maintains the towns. It is said that knowledge is power. Nobody can have too much knowledge, and nobody can have too much education. A good knowledge of Greek or Latin would not prevent a man from shoeing a horse if he knew how to shoe a horse; but, on the other hand, there are some branches of education that are of most use, the simple branches, - arithmetic, spelling, writing a good hand, understanding the meaning of a word. Do not overlook those things in your education, because the education you are getting today is going to mark your ability in the future; it is going to be the measure of your success. I remember when I was a boy I thought some of the tasks were hard and I would like to be rid of them. As I grew older I had reason to be thankful that I did not get rid of them, and I want to urge upon you to remember that the days and the hours you give to your school education are your own, - they are to mark your future success and happiness. Nobody else can get that education for you. Money will not buy it. There is only one road to it and that is by honest close application to your studies; and if you fail to understand your lessons, later in life you will find that you made a grave mistake, and you will feel the want of the knowledge that you should have acquired when you were children at school.

I am glad to see so many of you here. I had no idea that Crookston could turn out so many school children. It may be that, dating back, my memory of Crookston is tinged with a little uncertainty. The first time I ever visited Crookston I stayed all night. There was not a house here. There were two tents, and I had a corner offered me in one of them; but the mosquitoes were so plentiful that I got up, backed up against a tree and built a smudge. What changes that have occurred since then! I have seen a great many between the Red River and the Pacific Ocean, and I helped to make some of them, I hope. I want to urge you to bear in mind that the future, the next fifty years, is of more importance to the people of this country, - and this includes the whole United States, - than any hundred years in its history. You will be the men and women of this coming time and it will be for you to see to it that the country and its institutions, its flag and law and order, are maintained. If you do well at school, if you get your education as your teachers give it to you, you will make good men and good women, and your own happiness will be greatly increased. I will not detain you here in the sun, and, in closing my remarks I bid you all God-speed and hope that you will bear in mind what I have said to you today and that I will be spared to see you all grown up. Do not neglect your education. Your teacher cannot give it to you against your will. You must do it yourself; and when it is done, it is your own education, and it is the education and knowledge that you have to work with all the days of your life. Now, I do not want to spoil the girls a bit, but I was a young man once and I was caught by a young woman. I have often been complimented by people saying that I am masterful and a boss, but I want to state here that, under her shadow, (bowing towards Mrs. Hill) I do not boss anybody.