

Copy

*Mr. Dept. of
Education
Quebec*

March 25th, 1931.

Dr. W. P. Percival,
Director of Protestant Education,
Department of Education,
Q u e b e c.

Dear Dr. Percival:-

I am much obliged for your letter of the 31st enclosing copy of a communication from the Superintendent of Schools, Montreal, and in addition letter from the Principal of the Commercial High School, Montreal. The purport of these letters is the claim for recognition in marks and as an optional subject of the combined study of Shorthand and Typing. There appear to be two grounds for this request:-

1. That these subjects have some cultural value.
2. That the Course of Study of which these form a part consists of English, French, Mathematics, History and a Science subject. (It may be assumed that this Science subject is presumably either Botany, Physics, Chemistry, Biology or General Science.)

I deny at once as utterly untenable the theory that Shorthand and Typing in themselves have any cultural value whatever. In my long business experience I have at least some claim to a knowledge of the people who enter the business world equipped as stenographers. It may be that Stenography can be used as an instrument whereby cultural values can be attained, as, for instance, in its employment in the further study of English, but no one can produce any logical argument to show that the possession of these mechanical subjects has qualified the recipient to be called an educated person because his mental equipment has been either broadened or stimulated thereby.

The real essence of the request by the Superintendent is that the School in question (and others akin to it which may be now or later on established) is wasting its time by having students employed in the study of Shorthand and Typewriting for 3 full years, whereas they can acquire this mechanical proficiency in one year. In fact, in outside Commercial Colleges students do this