

number of subjects taught, leaving consequently less time for some other subjects. Now, how can a man who does not visit a school and who does not know the language of the children, be a good judge of that school? Most certainly, he cannot be, and I dare say that almost all those who take upon themselves to criticise the Manitoba Catholic schools, are in that position; consequently their testimony is not worth consideration. But I will go further and put before you as good evidence as can be had that our schools were as efficient as the circumstances of the province could allow. First take our programme; that programme contains 15 clauses and the subjects to be taught according to that programme are these:—Religious instruction in the child's language; reading, spelling, grammar, analysis and composition, these four subjects in French and English; penmanship, drawing, arithmetic, mensuration, and algebra; book-keeping, single and double entry; geography, all parts of the world; sacred history, history of Canada, England and France; good behaviour, etc., useful knowledge, chemistry, agriculture and astronomy. For the girls, domestic economy, sewing embroidery, etc. Now, I contend that this programme is as comprehensive as it should be for a primary school. It must not be forgotten that the aim of an ordinary primary school is not to make scientists. It is to give a good start for the higher studies for those whose circumstances will permit them to make such a study, and for others a sufficient knowledge to hold their own in the humble condition in which God has placed them. The programme which I have just read to you fulfils the condition. To increase in that programme would be cramming, and would tend more to injure the health and intelligence of the child than to do him good. At times some chances are given when a kind of test may be made as between the various schools: exhibitions, for instance, and opinions from people who, by their position and previous relations, may be said to be good judges. It has been the privilege of our schools to be submitted to such tests, and here are the results. At the first school exhibition at Portage la Prairie, in our own province, we had an exhibition where the Protestants and the Catholics exhibited side by side the work of their pupils, and general school work. Our schools were then awarded a diploma for general excellence. Some years

afterwards we were invited to take part in the London Colonial Exhibition; and we sent there, though very reluctantly, as the notice appeared too short, exhibits from eleven schools. Nine were awarded the diploma, and the Catholic superintendent was also in receipt of one of those diplomas. The Protestant schools may also have received some, but I must say that I have never heard that they did. And now, if we go to the grand Chicago Fair, there also the Catholic schools, their methods, their teachers and their exhibits were declared to be of a superior order by friends and foes, by experts and visitors of distinction, and finally by the judges. However, it may be said that it was not the Catholic schools of Manitoba but the Catholic schools of Quebec which exhibited, but as the accusation of inferiority bears not only on the Manitoba schools but generally on the Catholic schools, it is quite proper to refer to the result of the Chicago exhibition as offering a sure evidence of the adequacy of our system, and of the Catholic schools everywhere, and unless these exhibition tests are ignored—and if they be ignored what is the use of having them—unless these exhibition tests are set aside it must be considered that they entirely destroy that accusation of inferiority. So much for the exhibition. Let us take some of the testimonials that were sent to us by persons in a position to know. On the occasion of the Colonial exhibition at London, we had correspondence from which I quote. I will first read a letter from Captain William Clarke who took part in the repression of the rebellion in the North-west in 1885:—

LONDON, 27th July, 1886.

DEAR SIR,—I can speak with experience with reference to the excellence of your section, two of my daughters having been for a long time with the good sisters of St. Boniface, where their progress was as satisfactory to me as it was pleasant to them.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
WILLIAM CLARKE.

That letter was addressed to me as superintendent of education. Mr. Clarke was not a Roman Catholic, but was a very decided Protestant. Sir Charles Tupper was not a Catholic either, yet he wrote this letter:

COLONIAL AND INDIAN EXHIBITION, 1886,
CANADIAN SECTION,
LONDON, 29th July, 1886.

TO T. A. BERNIER, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,—I duly received your letter of the 3rd inst., and thank you for the memorandum