

To His Royal Highness Prince Arthur Patrick William Albert, Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of St. Patrick, &c., &c.

May it please your Royal Highness,—

We, the Protestant Board of School Commissioners for the City of Montreal, feel deeply grateful that your Royal Highness has been pleased to honour with your presence the opening of this school.

We beg leave to express to your Royal Highness the reverence and regard in which we hold the exalted virtues and beneficent rule of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen.

The duty devolved on this Board by the Government of the Province and the civil authorities, is that of providing for the Protestant children of Montreal, a sound and liberal education.

The Commissioners have been engaged in this work during a period of about twenty-three years.

Previously to the year 1868, owing to the smallness of the public grant for education, the Commissioners were able to provide for the Protestant community of Montreal, only three schools, and even these were of a comparatively inferior order.

Recent legislation has enabled the Board to increase the efficiency of the schools then in operation, to add this establishment to their number, to plan a yet wider extension of the work of education, and, at the same time, to reduce the school-fees to a merely nominal charge.

The Commissioners have also made arrangements by which the sons of the humblest citizens may, by competition, be advanced from the common schools, as free scholars to the High School of Montreal and to the McGill University.

We cordially welcome your Royal Highness to our new school house, built in furtherance of this important work,—a work in the success of which, we are sure, your Royal Highness takes deep interest.

Signed, on behalf and by authority of the Board, on this 11th day of February, eighteen hundred and seventy.

(Signed,)

JOHN JENKINS, D.D.,
Chairman.

WM. LUNN, Secretary.

A deputation of children from the several Protestant schools of the city then came forward to present an address to His Royal Highness. The following are their names:—From the Royal Western School, Master George Lochart Lamb and Miss Louisa Walmsley; from the British Canadian School, Cote street, Master George Bradshaw and Miss Sarah Oppenheimer; from the Panet street School, Master Edward Heath and Miss Sarah Ferguson; and from the St. Ann street School, Master William Scott and Miss Amanda Woods. Master George L. Lamb was the one selected to read the address on behalf of the others, which he did in a very creditable style. It is as follows:

To His Royal Highness Prince Arthur,

Your being present at the opening of our new School is, we know, a very great honour, while it adds to the joy we feel when we think that we are to go on with our studies in so fine a building. Here we hope to learn and gain that which alone can make us faithful children of God, good subjects of our gracious Queen and true lovers of our country.

We shall ever look back upon this day with pride, not only because this school has been built for the good of us children, but also because we have been favoured with your royal countenance.

His Royal Highness bowed gracefully on receiving this Address, and then proceeded to read the following reply:

Most sincerely do I return my thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Commissioners, as well as to the children of this School, for the gratifying addresses that have just been presented, and for the hearty welcome that has been accorded to me. You are right in believing that I take a deep interest in the success of so useful an establishment as that which we are now here to open. I assure you I regard the spread of general education, combined with religious teaching, of the most vital importance, not only to each individual person, but likewise to the progress, the welfare and the safety of a country. The efforts which you have been making in behalf of a sound and liberal education, accessible to the poorest classes, are most praiseworthy, and sincerely do I hope, that through God's blessing, your labors may be crowned with the utmost success, and that the many children here taught may in after years look back upon the days they have spent here with deep gratitude to the Almighty for the benefits they have derived.

ARTHUR.

After the cheering which followed the reading of this Address had subsided,

Rev. Dr. Jenkins rose and said: May it please your Royal Highness, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,—To the Protestant School Commissioners of Montreal this is indeed a high day. Not alone because we are favored with the Royal presence, but also because we have before us evidence that education is making some little progress amongst the Protestants of Montreal. No work of greater moment to the city and its interests can devolve on any number of men than that of securing for the middle and lower classes a sound and liberal education. When I say a sound education, let me observe, that in our judgment, as Commissioners, no education can be sound but that which is based upon the Word of God. And no education, moreover, can be liberal but that which is based upon a Book of the highest antiquity, of the largest comprehensiveness as to morals, as to our duty to each other and our duty to the Supreme Being. Public school education was initiated in Montreal by a few British and Canadian gentlemen, who founded the British and Canadian School, in 1822. The school now in operation was built in 1827, nearly half a century ago. This school was supported by French-Canadians and British alike. The representative of His Majesty King George the Fourth, the Earl of Dalhousie, then Governor General, was the first patron of the British-Canadian School. He was not a mere nominal patron, but a real patron of that institution—evinced a lively interest in the school, visiting it from time to time, and recording his satisfaction with its character. And, besides that, he educated and clothed at his own expense 40 French-Canadian children. Our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens had no public school at that time in the city of Montreal, and, like good citizens and good neighbors, they met together in the British and Canadian School. In this school, I may add, many of our professional men and successful merchants, received what education they ever had the privilege to receive. The establishment of the British and Canadian School gave an impulse to common school education which is felt to this day. In 1846 the Government of Canada passed the act under which the Protestant Board of School Commissioners was appointed for Montreal, and at the same time the Roman Catholic Board of School Commissioners was appointed. The money at the disposal of the Board, derived from two sources—the public funds and the city funds—was at that time \$1,116. In 1852 it was reduced to \$1000. During that year, however, by dint of economy, the Board saved money enough from their income to enable them to purchase, in 1853, the school house in St. Ann street. In 1860, the Panet street school house in Quebec Suburbs was erected at a cost of \$5,000. Down to 1863 the income of the Board was from \$1,200 to \$1,400 a year; from 1864 to 1868 \$2,100; in 1868 under a special act, about \$9,000; and as the result of the legislation of 1869, the annual income is, as nearly as we can arrive at it at present about \$19,000. From this statement it must be clear to every one that for years the Board was crippled in its efforts to overtake the educational wants of the Protestant population of the City. With varying success we gave an education to a comparatively large number of children, but it was an elementary education—very elementary. As soon as the Board had a prospect of an income more adequate to its wants it resolved upon two or three things. First, to enlarge the buildings as much as possible. This was done in Panet and Cote streets, for the British and Canadian School, I ought to have said, in 1867 was placed under the charge of the Protestant School Commissioners. We resolved also, not only to increase the size of the buildings but, what we felt to be more important, to raise the standard of Education in the Schools. This of course involved the employment of teachers of a high class. I may say here that the Commissioners have felt all along that the progress of their work for the last two or three years is due in a great measure to the existence of the Normal College; and they are indebted for the existence of that college to my honorable friend, Mr. Chauveau, the Minister of Public Instruction, who has taken a very great interest in the establishment of such institutions. I say the Commissioners have felt all along that it would be impossible to man our schools with teachers of a sufficiently high class but for the Normal College, which is sending out so many thoroughly accomplished men and women for the schools. We have established in each of these schools what we call an advanced class—it may be designated a grammar school class—in which are taught the elements of geometry and algebra and the elements of the Latin tongue, our object being to send up by competition from these common schools to the High School of Montreal the cleverest—the best class, intellectually and morally,—that is the best way to put it,—of the children of the middle and lower classes. We wish that these children should have the same opportunity, by the gifts which God has given