

In addition to the official correspondence which took place on this subject, quite a number of private Letters were exchanged between him and a Member of the Government at the time. These Letters Dr. Ryerson intrusted to me, with the desire of having them published, (which I intend to do), at a future day.

In his Letter to me of the 21st of February, 1876—the day of his leaving the Department, he said :—

“Although I know that you have been opposed to the change, yet, could I have believed that I might have been of any service to you, or to others, with whom I have laboured so cordially, or that I could have advanced the School System, I would not have voluntarily retired from office.”

In my “Sketch of Rev. Dr. Ryerson,” read at the unveiling of his Portrait, and that of Rev. Dr. Nelles, in Victoria College, in 1894, I quoted the following passage from a Letter written to me by Dr. Ryerson, while in London, near the close of 1876, in which he said :—

“Had the Government allowed us to work, as we had done in former years, and sustained us, we would have done great things for our Country . . . and I could have died in harness with you. But it was not to be. . . I have no doubt it will be seen that the hand of God is in this, as it has been in all of our work for more than thirty years.”

The last important official act of Dr. Ryerson was to arrange for the Educational Exhibit of the Department at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. That was most successfully carried out; and, at the close of that Exhibition, the following highly gratifying “Award” was communicated to the then venerable ex-chief, after he had retired from office. The Award was made by the American Centennial Commission, and was to the following effect :—

For a quite complete and admirably arranged Exhibition, illustrating the Ontario system of Education and its excellent results; also for the efficiency of an Administration which has gained for the Ontario Department a most honourable distinction among Government Educational agencies.

This Award was quite a gratification to the retired Chief of the Department, then in his seventy-third year, and amply repaid him, as he said, for many years of anxious toil and solicitude, while it was a gratifying and unlooked-for compensation for all of the undeserved opposition which he had encountered while laying the foundations of our Educational System.

Having so long enjoyed the warm personal friendship of such a man, it is no wonder that I cherish his memory with sincerest affection. I am delighted that Victoria College does honour to his noble character, and thus recognizes his services in its behalf, and, in a wider and more extended sense, his active labours for the benefit of his native Country, which he served so long, so faithfully, and so well.