

Speech by the Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education.

The following is a short resume of a speech by the Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education, at the Annual Presentation of Medals, at the Northern Business College, Owen Sound, May 7, 1890.

It pleases me very much to be here on this occasion. It is very gratifying to be present to-day and to hear the high mead of praise accorded to this institution by my friend, Mayor McLean, and the other speakers who have preceded me, and to take part in the distribution of medals and prizes to the students of this institution.

It pleases me very much to see the educational enterprise of Mr. Fleming who has by energy and perseverance built up a school which gives promise of being one of the first schools of the day.

I have something to do with most of the schools of the province. I am blamed for any failure, and credited to

a certain extent for the successes of the educational institutions I am said to be responsible to the people for. I am not in any way responsible for the working of this or, in fact, of any business college, nor yet am I to be praised for their successes. The business college of to-day is an institution that stands wholly on its own merits, without government or municipal aid. It exists because there is a demand for the practical education given within its walls in this enterprising commercial country. The education given in the business college we find cannot be successfully given at any other place. Many efforts have been made to give such a training in our Collegiate Institutes, in our high schools, and in our common schools, but every such effort has been a failure to a considerable extent. There are too many other things already to divide the attention. The school system of classification is too rigid to admit of the variety of persons wishing to obtain such education being taken into classes together.

It pleases me very much to see young men and women take a few months in a school of this kind, it fits them for the duties of life. I am glad to see so many of the students are young women.

The future of Canada depends upon the young men and women, and the more of both sexes that receive a business training the better for the commercial interests of this progressive country. I know that the young men and women before me now will find this education very beneficial in whatever calling they may be, whether in the workshop, behind the counter, or following the plough. There is not a calling or pursuit in which there are no business interests and the better those business interests are looked after the better for the owner of the business and the better for the country in general.

I do not need to advise you all to cultivate the habit of self reliance. A good commercial training is well calculated to inspire young men and women with confidence and to cultivate habits of neatness of work and exactness in transacting whatever business is entrusted to them. Let me advise you not to leave to another person anything that has been intrusted to yourself to do. Be honest and upright, do not act false to anyone and you will succeed in any position you may occupy.