

TO THE UNITY LEAGUE OF ONTARIO

Dear Sirs:

As requested by your Provisional Committee, I spent two days in Ottawa examining the senior classes of the French Separate Schools, testing the ability of the pupils in the use of the English language. I tested them in reading, in speaking and writing English, and in their ability to understand English, when they hear it spoken. I have pleasure in reporting the result of my investigations:

1. *In reading English* I found the pupils able to read as fluently and as expressively as children do in the English-speaking districts of Ontario, both new sections, and those they had read before. I found, too, that they understood what they read. I made a practice of asking all who could tell me the meaning of the uncommon and more difficult words to stand up, and I always got a prompt response from several members of the class. When I asked for other words that might be used correctly instead of the words in the book I always got two or more words to correctly express the same meaning. In one third book class I heard as good reading in tone, emphasis, fluency and especially in dramatic expression as I ever heard in any School in which English was the language of the pupils. In one School I heard excellent recitation, in reading new selections, while some new words were not quite properly pronounced, the readers did not hesitate to pronounce them and freely read words they had not read before without leaving out a syllable. In this respect I think they would not take second place, if tested in competition with English-speaking children anywhere.

2. *In writing English* I usually put three subjects on the blackboard and allowed each pupil to choose the one he preferred to write about. I gave them only five minutes to write. The penmanship, the spelling and the composition in all the schools, were quite as good as would be found in corresponding English classes of the same grades in Ontario. The pupils had no time to re-write their compositions. In reading the compositions I was very much impressed by the fact that the pupils of ten, eleven or twelve years of age expressed their ideas better than the older pupils. I attribute this to the better methods of teaching introduced by the Director of Education who has held his position only a few years.

3. *In speaking English*, considering the fact that I was a stranger I had ready responses, several rising to answer my questions or to speak about subjects I suggested. I often asked their opinions about subjects I named, and followed up each answer by asking their reasons for holding the opinions they expressed. When the first one I asked had expressed his opinion and given his reasons I gave opportunity to others to give their reasons or to express other opinions. The classes responded freely. The answers showed independent thinking and good command of the English language.

4. *In understanding English, when spoken to them*, There was no doubt about this. I paid special attention to

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