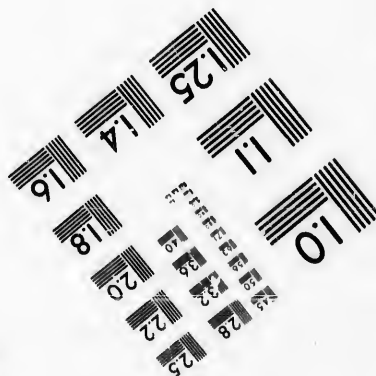
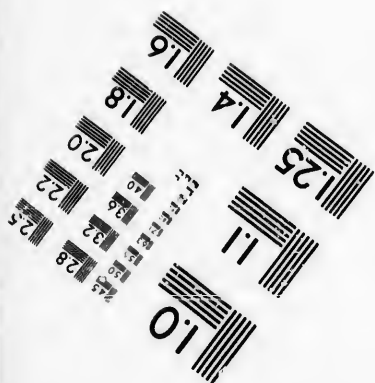
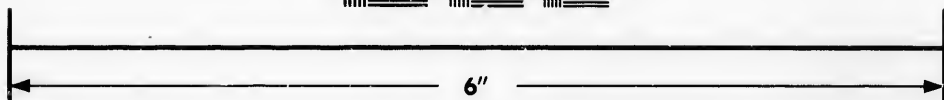
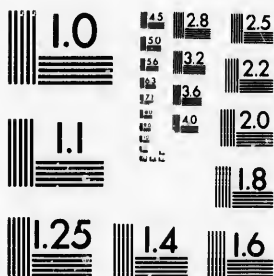


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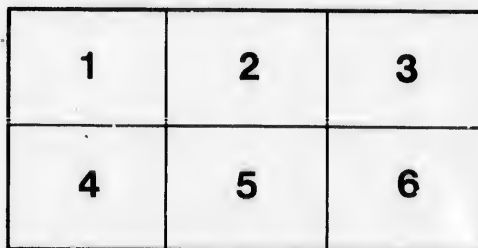
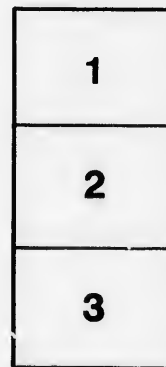
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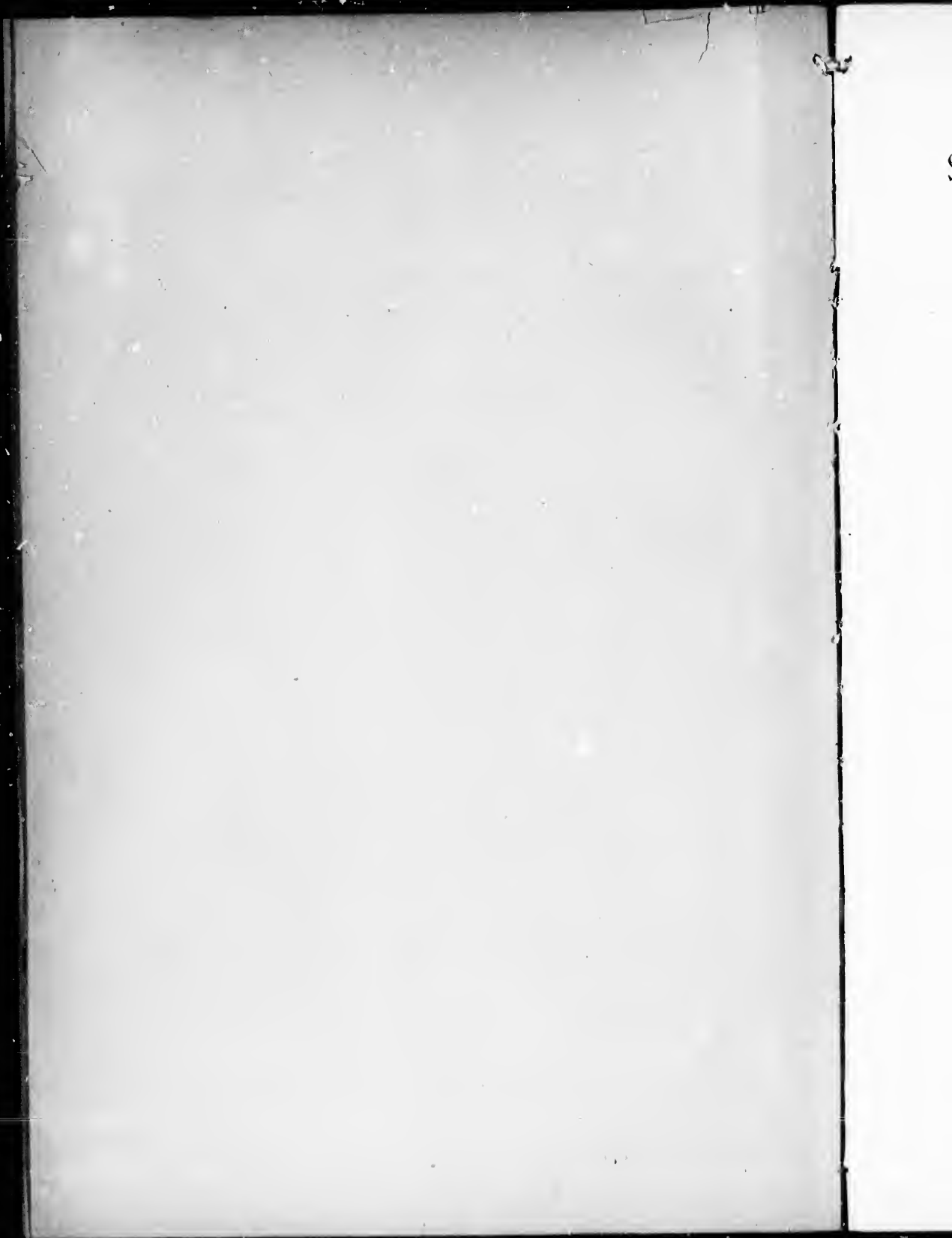
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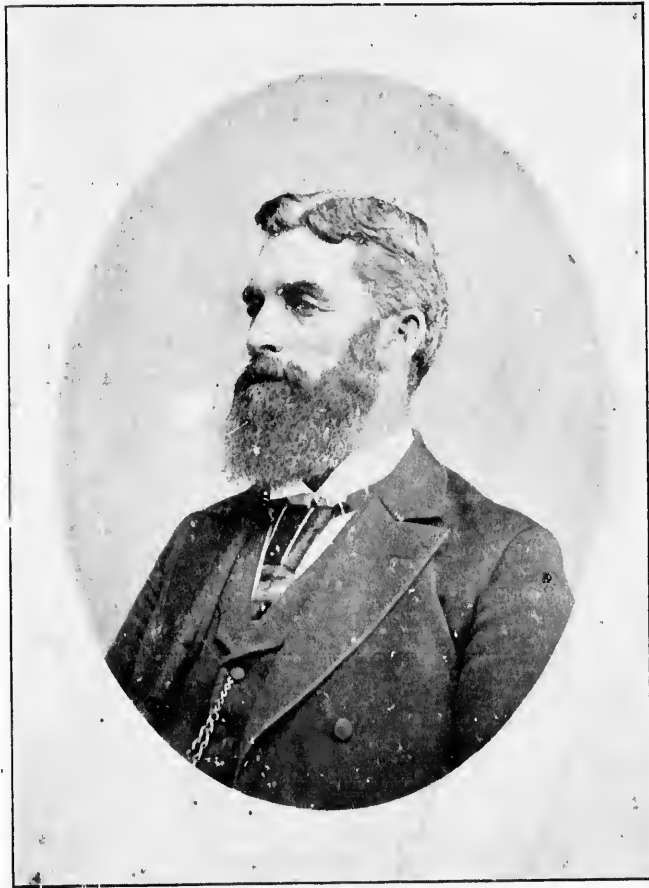
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SPEECH ON THE REMEDIAL BILL

(MANITOBA SCHOOLS)



C. FAIRBAIRN, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, 31ST MARCH, 1896.

SPEECH

OF

C. FAIRBAIRN, M.P.

ON THE

REMEDIAL BILL, MANITOBA

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, 31st MARCH, 1896.

Mr. FAIRBAIRN. I did not intend to say a word in this debate, were it not for the remarks made by the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace), a man for whom I had the highest esteem all my life, a man whom I went a long way to oblige, and a man to whom I have given a good many votes, to keep him in the position he now occupies of Grand Sovereign of the Orange Order. When that hon. gentleman (Mr. Wallace) said here to-night, that I was coerced to vote as I did on the second reading of the Bill, I have a right to rise in this House and to rebuke that remark of the hon. gentleman. I want to tell the hon. member for West York that I think I represent as many Orangemen in this House as any man, taking the population according to the square mile, outside of the cities. I say that the Orangemen of Canada are a body of men that I am proud of; a body of men that are a credit to this country. I want to tell that hon. gentleman here to-night, in good faith and in good feeling, that there was not one man in South Victoria who asked me how I was going to vote on this question. I want also to tell the hon. gentleman (Mr. Wallace), that there was not one member of this Government, or not one member of this Parliament, who asked me how I was going to vote. I want to tell the hon. gentleman (Mr. Wallace) that my Protestant ideas and principles are just as strong as his, but I am a lover of fair-play, and

the minority in Manitoba have a grievance, and I, as an Orangeman, am willing to relieve them from that grievance. I tell the hon. gentleman that I speak for conscience sake in this matter. I have a feeling for the men who went to that country as pioneers, and who had the heavens for a blanket and only the sod of the prairie for a pillow; and when the descendants of those people come and ask for fair-play from the people of this country, I think it would be a pity if I could not give it to them. The hon. gentleman knows as well as I do that the Protestants of that country asked that they might enjoy the same privileges as the Protestant minority of Quebec enjoyed, and their request was granted, by the Canadian Government. But when the descendants of the old pioneer missionaries of that country are reduced to a small minority, and a Grit government gets into power and takes away the rights and privileges which they had enjoyed under the government of this country, I say—and I will not take back on any platform in Canada anything I say here to-night—that these men have my sympathy, and therefore I voted that this Government should give that minority their rights. The minority in Manitoba might have been Protestant, just as they are Catholic, and I wonder how the hon. gentleman would like it if a Protestant minority were subject to Catholic schools. For my part I would not wish it. I believe in fair-play; and when the hon. gentleman

accuses me, after thirty-five years of public life, of being coerced to vote as I have done. I draw the lines on that hon. gentleman.

Mr. WALLACE. Did I refer to the hon. gentleman?

Mr. FAIRBAIRN. You referred to every member on this side of the House.

Mr. WALLACE. I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. I did not refer to every member from Ontario. I said there were members.

Mr. FAIRBAIRN. You alluded to me, when you looked at this side of the House.

Mr. WALLACE. The hon. gentleman says I looked at him. Perhaps I did.

Mr. FAIRBAIRN. I wish to tell the hon. gentleman that it comes with bad grace from him, with reference to me, at least. There was no more anxious man in this House than myself when he was on trial a few years ago, and when Sir Adolphe Caron assembled his whole forces for the relief and saving of the hon. gentleman, in the absence of our leader, Sir John Thompson, who was absent on that most important mission in connection with the Behring Sea question; and it comes with bad grace from him to speak in the way he does to-day of men who take their political lives in their hands on behalf of justice. I offer my regrets and rebukes for that kind of remark, when it comes near home. I have given a vote, and I have given it conscientiously without being asked by anybody. After the argument made by the hon. Secretary of State upon the second reading of this Bill, it seems to me that those people in Manitoba should have settled this difficulty in three hours. As a juror of this country, I fail to see that the argument laid down by the hon. Secretary of State has been answered or confuted yet. I, as a juror, if sworn as before a court, could not help giving the verdict I did, according to the evidence presented to this House. Every fair-minded man would have to admit the same thing, if he was a sworn juror. Now, I want to say to the hon. leader of the Opposition that I regret exceedingly that I, as an Orangeman since the year 1855, have to stand on the floor of this House and vindicate the rights of the Catholic minority in Manitoba when the leader of the Opposition will not stand up for the rights of the minority of his own religion, for the sake of political clap-trap. I say as an honest

man and having the courage of my convictions that it is greatly to be regretted that a man would sacrifice the rights of his own church and his own people for the sake of a little political capital. I pity the hon. gentleman. I remember very well a day or two after the opening of this debate, when I was standing up in defence of the hon. gentleman, and saying that I was pleased to see him in good health and good form and good voice, and that he had made a good fight in such a bad cause, always having a sympathy for the "under dog" in a fight, a nice little curly-headed French Canadian remarked: "Mr. Laurier speak well, speak long, but, my God, he say nothing." I agree with that bright, black-eyed young French Canadian that Mr. Laurier spoke well, and spoke long, but he said nothing. He never pretended to answer the arguments of the leader of the House. I say it is an outrage upon the stability of this country that these people in Manitoba cannot enjoy the same educational privileges as the Protestant minority enjoy in Quebec. I would go a long way to allow them to have the same privileges, and I think the least we can do is to give them the privilege of putting their hands in their pockets to provide for the education of their own children. The religious teaching of our children is a sacred right that all Canadians have a right to enjoy. The hon. leader of the Opposition made a remark in his first speech which I think was in bad taste. He pitched into his clergyman. If my clergyman interfered with anything pertaining to my farm, I would cross swords with him very quick; but I think any clergyman has a right to look after the religious interests of his own flock. I had not looked at that letter until after I had heard the hon. gentleman's remarks. Then I went and hunted it up, and I really thought it was very fair, and gave good advice to the hon. gentleman, and he might be proud to follow a shepherd like that. Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to prolong the debate. I did not intend to say a word until I heard the remark of the hon. member for West York which I thought it was my duty to rise in my place and contradict. I pity the leader of the Opposition for the fact that he will sacrifice his religious principles for a little political capital, nothing more nor less. As I have spoken impromptu and without notes, I regret that I have been unable to do justice to this important subject.

