

Montreal, Feb'y 1896.

Dear Sir Charles,

Referring to our conversation a short time ago, I desire to mention the views I have arrived at, after a long educational experience, on the question of separate schools, which has so unhappily been raised by the Govt. of Manitoba after it had been supposed to be settled by the constitution of the Dominion and by the arrangements based thereon for Quebec and Ontario.

While I have no doubt of the Constitutional rights of minorities and hold that a great responsibility has been incurred by those who have reopened this question as an element of party strife, my own special standpoint is that of protestantism, in connection with the promotion of good education for all.

In this country all or nearly all the members of Protestant bodies have agreed on a system of common schools not purely secular, but recognizing the bible as the text-book of religion.

and morals, and leaving more special teaching of a denominational character to the home, the Sunday School and the Ministers of Religion. The Clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in this country hold that the teaching of the particular doctrine of their Church in the schools is necessary to the spiritual welfare of their adherents. It thus happens that the people are, on what seem to be purely religious grounds, divided into two camps in the matter of education, each desiring to pursue its own methods.

The Protestant method has the advantages of securing continuation of means in support of education, while avoiding that want of higher moral influence which injures purely secular schools, of freeing the state from any responsibility in the matter of particular dogma, of tending to social and national union among all classes, and of evidencing the substantial unity of Christians, whatever their differences in details of doctrine. Hence in a Protestant community so united, a dissentient minority is obliged, for conscience

sake, to forfeit some advantages, whatever
may be done in its behalf in the way
of public aid or of the general
superann provided by a national
system.

Protestants are especially bound
to keep in view the suffering of the
minority for conscience sake, as their
own assertion of right of private
judgment and religious liberty has its
obligations as well as its advantages,
and implies that tolerance which shall
be willing to favour equal rights in
the case of persons of different faiths.
This obligation is at present acknowledged
in most protestant countries, and
eminently in the British Empire.
Nor have Roman Catholic Communities been
found unwilling to reciprocate in the
case of Protestant minorities, as for instance
in the Province of Quebec. The people of
Manitoba have certainly shown a praiseworthy
zeal in the matter of education, and
there may be circumstances and ~~there~~
may in a new and sparsely settled country
which impose difficulties in the way of a

liberal treatment of the minority; but it is a cause of regret to their fellow Protestants in the other provinces that they should not have been prepared to have all difficulties andirks thrown even to seem to be recreant to the good principle of liberty of conscience,

The experience of the older Provinces proves that there are really no practical difficulties in securing the educational rights of minorities, whether Catholic or Protestant. In so far as the schools are supported by fees or local rates, the minority has a right to the benefit of what it pays. In so far as legislative aids are concerned, it has a right to its share in proportion to population, subject only to the condition that the money shall be expended according to law, and for the purpose for which it was granted. This can be secured by the same inspection to which all public schools are liable. In the larger centres of population and where the two creeds are approximately equal, there is no difficulty;

and where either party is locally in a small
minority and too weak to sustain an
efficient school, it should have the
power to combine the children of several
districts and if necessary to provide means
of conveyance for the more distant
children. Where even this will not
avail, under proper limitations short-term
schools and temporary schools may be
provided, and such specially weak com-
munities may be aided by a small
allowance to poor districts as provided
in other provinces.

Even where there are isolated
families for whom neither of the above
means are available, experience has
proved that there is usually sufficient
neighborly feeling to enable the com-
munities of schools to make such
special arrangements for the children
of such families.

It is further to be observed that
when the rights of the minority are
respected, the majority is left free to at-
tend to religious education in such
manner as it may deem best, and

on the other hand the whole responsibility
of the general education of the minority
is thrown upon it & upon its leaders,
and experience has shown that this
has acted as a very wholesome
stimulus in the improvement of
the schools.

It is farther to be observed that
the creed which has the majority in a
province may in certain localities be
in the minority, while that which has
is in the minority in the province
may have a large majority in certain
districts, and thus it happens that
both parties may locally be in need
of the privileges accorded to minorities.

In an educational experience
of nearly fifty years I have found three
principles and methods capable of
application in the case of minorities both
Catholic and Protestant, and conducive
to the public good, not only in the
advancement of education but also
in cultivating a friendly and charitable
spirit and a wholesome emulation be-

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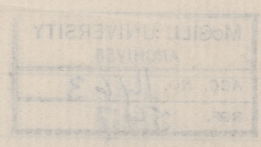
three people of different creeds, and
I would commend them to the
consideration of the people of Manitoba,
as more likely to promote the progress
and education of their province than
any methods which however theoretically
perfect, leave any portion of the
people in a position which they may
consider to be one of educational or
religious disability. Education must be
just to all, and not regulated by any
feelings of jealousy on the part of different
creeds. Should ~~the~~ such jealousy or dislike
exist, justice and even liberality in all
that concerns the welfare of the children,
will pursue the best means for its removal.

The present controversy respecting
the schools of Manitoba may do
good, if it tends to impress more
strongly on all parents the paramount
importance not only of securing the best
possible education for their own children
but of aiding others, however different
in religious belief or however deficient
in culture, to enjoy like advantages;
and if it serves to enhance our

appreciation of the benefits we enjoy under
a constitution which respects alike the
religious convictions and educational needs
of people of every creed and origin, in this
respect following the example of the great
empire to which we belong, which everywhere
protects the weak against the strong, and
accords equal civil and religious rights to
all, without even excepting those who when
they have the power deny such rights to others;
— in this being like the Father in Heaven
"who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and
on the ~~just~~^{good}; and sendeth rain on the just and
on the unjust."

J. M. Dawson

July 5, 1896.



Sir Wm Dawson
Montreal

Feb 96

Dear Sir
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th inst. in relation to the proposed extension of the Montreal and North Shore Railway. I have the pleasure to inform you that the same has been referred to the Board of Railway Commissioners and they have advised that they are in favor of the extension of the line to the North Shore.

I have the honor to inform you that the same has been referred to the Board of Railway Commissioners and they have advised that they are in favor of the extension of the line to the North Shore.

Yours faithfully,
Wm Dawson

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