

and second years in the elementary course. In this respect the regulation is as follows :

The Dominion readers, first (part I., part II.) and second—these are optional for Roman Catholic separate schools ; bi-lingual series, first (part I., part II.) and second readers—these are optional in schools where French is the vernacular ; German readers, Ahn's first and second German books.

This is the only deviation from the regular class books permitted to separate schools that are ordinarily employed throughout the schools in the Canadian Northwest.

Then, I come to the question of religious teaching which has so often been referred to in this House. It is permissible to open the school with the Lord's Prayer and it is also permissible after half past three in the afternoon to have religious instruction. But that can only be given in case the parents themselves petition for it and the trustees consent to it. In such case a minister or a priest may teach from half past three to four o'clock, but it is specially provided that any scholar may absent himself from such teaching if his parents so desire, and also that any scholar who may be proficient in religious teaching shall not have his marks counted to his advantage in the general total. We also find that the university which they have by recent legislation decided to establish in the Northwest shall be strictly non-sectarian in principle and that no religious dogma or creed shall be taught and no religious test shall be required of any student or other person, so that, as I pointed out, the system in vogue in the Canadian Northwest is not only a non-sectarian system, but I might also say a system that is practically divorced from religious teaching.

There is a small number of separate schools in the Canadian Northwest and that number is not increasing notwithstanding the fact that the Roman Catholic population has been growing. In 1898 there were 509 public school districts established in the Canadian Northwest. Last year this number had increased to 1,235, or, in other words it had become just two and a half times as great as it was six years ago. Has there been a corresponding increase in the number of separate schools ? Let us see. In 1898 there were 14 separate school districts, and in 1904, 16 separate school districts, and if I am rightly informed but 12 of these are in operation and but 10 of these are Roman Catholic separate schools. If we look into the character of these Roman Catholic separate schools we find that eight of them are to be found in municipalities of considerable size where there are already other schools established and where the existence of two schools together is in no wise a detriment to education. Further, by reference to page 129 of the annual Northwest Territory report for 1903 we find that every one of these eight separate schools has a certificated teacher

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and that four of these schools have two certificated teachers. It has been said that if this legislation that the government is now proposing in the form of the amended clause 16 should pass, it would be but the entering wedge for the gradual establishment of a complete dual system of schools in the Canadian Northwest. I think the history of schools and of education in the Canadian Northwest denies that proposition. I know it is extremely difficult for the separate schools at the present time existing to keep pace with the requirements—that the struggle which it is necessary for them to make is hardly commensurate with the returns they secure from it, and it is highly improbable if this legislation is permitted to continue that the number of separate schools in the Canadian Northwest will ever be an appreciable quantity.

As one interested in Canadian education and not without experience in dealing with some of its problems, in endeavouring to arrive at a conclusion as to what course I shall follow in regard to this Bill, I naturally ask myself whether the existing educational system in the Canadian Northwest is in any way detrimental to educational efficiency. If I should find that the perpetuation of this so-called—for it is only so-called—separate system in the Canadian Northwest diminished the educational excellence that might otherwise be attained, then I would feel strongly constrained not to perpetuate a system which was calculated to fall below the general average of education. But my fears in that respect would be absolutely groundless, I believe. The more I examine into the existing system in the Northwest, the more I am convinced that it is one of the most efficient systems to be found anywhere in Canada. I have been endeavouring to make certain tests of this system in order to find out, by the rules we are accustomed to apply in other provinces, whether educational efficiency in the Northwest is all that may be desired. We speak, for instance, of the percentage of certificated teachers, and I find that in 1903 only five per cent of these teachers in the entire Canadian Northwest were teaching on temporary permits without certificates, and although 250 new teachers flocked in there last year the percentage of uncertificated teachers is now only seven per cent. I believe the best provinces we have, educationally speaking, are Manitoba and Ontario, but they cannot make any such showing as this, while in the province of Quebec, exclusive of the clerical teachers, we have from 15 to 17 per cent of the teachers who, unfortunately, are not properly certified. Again, if we look at the salaries which are paid, and this is always an excellent test as to the efficiency of the school system, because if the teacher makes the school it is the salary that gets the good teacher, here again we find the Canadian Northwest the banner section of Canada in