

## Agitation About Over; Laurier's Majority will be Large

INTERESTING REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION—VIEWS AND OPINIONS OF MR. E. W. THOMPSON, THE WELL-KNOWN OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT.

(Free Press, April 25)

Ottawa, April 19.—The House of Commons rises to-day for a fortnight of Easter vacation, which seems likely to be employed by Deepest Orange and Deepest Green in showing how these Christians love one another. They appear more inveterately ranged each against each, and both against Sir Wilfrid Laurier's proposed compromise on the Alberta Saskatchewan schools matter than they were when the continuous and weariful House debate began a month ago.

Deepest Orange now desires parliament to specifically forbid separate schools in the new provinces. This meek proposal goes on two presumptions: (1) that parliament has power to settle the business; (2) that if it be left to the courts they will (a) maintain such separate state-controlled schools as the Territorial legislature has established; or (b) may possibly maintain that Catholics have, in the new provinces, a legal right to control their own schools, free of state inspection.

Deepest Green desires school clauses that will clearly give the Catholics complete control of their separate schools. This request presumes that, if parliament did not act, but left the matter to the courts, these would maintain the existing state-controlled Protestant and Catholic separate schools, just as Sir Wilfrid Laurier proposes to do.

He holds that parliament is constitutionally bound to stand by the acts of previous parliaments and governments, from which acts the existing state-controlled separate schools have arisen; that those schools would be maintained by the courts if parliament did not specifically maintain them; and that it is Parliament's duty to so maintain them, in order to save the people of the new provinces from the expense and turmoil of prolonged litigation. To this it is replied that Parliament cannot settle the matter, because its action may be questioned as ultra vires in court. The rejoinder as made by Mr. Sifton is that Parliament having once resolved to maintain the existing system, can settle the imaginary doubt as to its powers by procuring an ample enabling act from the Imperial Parliament, as was done in a similar previous care.

Mr. Borden, the Opposition leader, holds that Parliament should not act regarding the schools, but leave the question of Catholic rights to the courts which might give Catholics all that Deepest Orange fears they could thus get, and which could not give them less, it seems generally agreed, than Sir Wilfrid proposes. Thus Mr. Borden ignores the opinion that Parliament is constitutionally required to stand by the acts of previous Parliaments, when these have created a vested right. It may be said that he also ignores the idea that there is a moral obligation on a government to save the country from prolonged turmoil. To this his adherents reply that the turmoil cannot be prevented by Sir Wilfrid's course, as they will keep on agitating. The answer is that the country will spew them out a fourth time, if they persist in trying to bedevil it by a race and creed row for years long, or till the time of the next general election.

Ordinary light yellow Orange is with Mr. Borden. Some Orange supports Sir Wilfrid—this variety coming from the West and knowing the schools there. Green of almost all shades is true to the premier, who thus gets important Tory support away from Mr. Borden. But Mr. Bourassa, with his friend and follower, Mr. Lavergne, an eloquent boy of twenty-three years, both extremely nationalistic, are ranged on this occa-

sion with the Blue or Tory bishops, the Deep Greens who desire confessional schools in the West.

Complicated as the factors of the situation are, Sir Wilfrid's majority on the reading will probably be 90, his party majority being less than 70. The present writer ventures to say that the enlarged majority will accurately represent public opinion. That opinion is not made by fanatics, but by moderate Protestants and Catholics in proportion to their numbers. The central truth around which public opinion forms is that the existing schools, proposed to be maintained in the new provinces, are on an ideal system, which provides at once for thorough state control, and for both Protestant and Catholic religious instruction.

One argument for confessional schools, an argument heard rather in private than in Parliament, must possess great interest at a time when so much is heard about race suicide. The argument springs from the procreative achievements of French Canadians. They were 65,000 in 1759. They are now, counting those in the States, 3,000,000. They have doubled every twenty years. At the same rate, they will number 24,000,000 in 1975. What has kept them in such remarkable fecundity? The priests know, or think they do. They reply, "The confessional, and more particularly the confessional school." It examines, warns, instructs, threatens the boy and the girl at the age of puberty, it keeps them clean, it implants in them a strong repugnance of all practices tending against large families, it inculcates pride in fatherhood and motherhood, it contemns the fear of poverty coming by sharing bread with children.

The hidden meaning of "race suicide" is not known to many French Canadians. One of their members of Parliament was recently bent on finding out what was meant by a term he saw so often in papers printed in the English tongue. On it being explained he could not credit that sane and healthy married people could wish to deny themselves children. "What for?" That they might enjoy more luxury, more excitement, more pleasure, more "life." Incredible to him. "Why," he said, "those people are insane. They value the little, mean, passing pleasures above the great, enduring joys and interests and happiness of life. Race suicide—Yes, but they kill their own lives first. What else is it but to refuse themselves children. It is through our children we keep on living. What is it to be poor? A trial—yes, of course. But not loneliness, unhappiness, vice, murder, cowardice, blasphemy, self-destruction, family killing, race killing, treachery to country all at once! The poor, crazy, wicked people. Better they were dead than insane that way." He spat and thanked God he was a French Canadian and a Catholic. The story does not relate that he was made aware of the practice of race suicide in old France. Had he been, he would, no doubt, have attributed it to the atheism which his clergy lament in the people of that country.

Messrs. Bourassa, Lavergne and the Bleu Bishops favor confessional schools because they have in common the wish that their people may multiply. If such schools have the peculiar value attributed to them, it would seem that Canada should further instead of hinder them. The country spends vast moneys in attracting immigration of Catholics as well as Protestants. Mr. Rider Haggard was here the other day booming new immigration schemes. Possibly the government may aid them. It would seem the height of folly and inconsistency to obstruct the spread of any school system which may really tend to multiply the native races.

What if the children get a smattering less of the three R's in such schools? The profound system of their directors is to select those youngsters who give indication of unusual intellectual parts and to look to the promotion and education of these bright ones, while the blockheads are not abandoned, but peculiarly encouraged to devote themselves to the manual labors for which they are fitted. It would be the ideal system if it could be administered with perfect fairness, and unaffected by the natural preferences of the clerical mind. That system has given the French Canadian people an extraordinarily well educated, adroit,

capable, bi-lingual lot of public men, real leaders of their people, not drivers, but very democratic and patriotic. In literature, French Canada is, so bi-lingual, people say, much richer than English Canada. In law, medicine, music, art, Quebec bears well a comparison. It may be a deep instinct in the British Protestants of Canada which causes so many of them to view with uneasiness the school system by which their French compatriots are at once kept multiplying and provided with intellectual classes that direct the masses, while evincing a singular solidarity and fraternity with them in sentiment and interest. The ancient church is credited with having carried the germs of learning and civilization across the dark ages. She may be destined to the credit of having borne even more valuable primal truths across the age of glare—and of prudential checks.

Quebec, the most fecund of the older provinces, is the only one that has a dual system of religious schools, one directed by a Protestant council of public instruction, and the other by a similar Catholic council. There the public schools have not been made wholly secular or "Godless" by force of an insensate argument that they should be so in order to be neutral as between children whose parents vary in worship. This dual system is as highly valued by the Protestants as the Catholics. It has been praised in the present debate by every Protestant speaker from Quebec, ministerialists and oppositionists alike. Mr. Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, sketched the religious features thus:

"I have here the report of the superintendent of public instruction of Quebec for the year 1903-4. The last one which I have received. I have here the curricula of the elementary Catholic and the elementary Protestant schools of the province of Quebec. I find in the curriculum for the Catholic elementary schools for the first year, the first morning study is prayers and catechism, taught orally, for the second year prayers and catechism, for the third year catechism, for the fourth year catechism. These are the opening exercises of the regular curriculum in the Catholic elementary schools of the province of Quebec. Now, what do I find in regard to Protestant schools? I find that the first half-hour of each day is to be devoted to the opening exercises, Scripture reading, singing and prayer, instruction in Scripture as below, and in morals, including readings and lessons upon Godliness, truthfulness, honor, respect for others, good manners, temperance, health, kindness to animals, etc., first lesson for the day is Scripture knowledge. In grade I. events connected with the birth of Christ, outlines of chief events to the end of the life of Joseph. Grade II.—as in previous year together with the Circumcision and Presentation of Jesus and outlines of chief events to the death of Joseph. I find in grade III. there is the same thing and in grade IV. studies about the life and words of Christ."

One of the commonest allegations of the opponents of separate schools is that they cause religious animosities by preventing the common education of the children. Precisely the opposite effect is produced in Quebec. There is no province so free of creed disturbances. Mr. Fisher, Liberal, and Mr. Ames, an able young Montreal Tory, testified alike to the good will and liberality of the Catholic majority. In doing so they evinced the responsive Protestant goodwill. If this does not come of separating impulsive children who are very likely to quarrel and revile one another about creed, from what can it arise? Protestants must accept that explanation, or acknowledge that a Catholic majority is more tolerant and kind and liberal than one of Protestants.

Not only have the Quebec Protestants absolute control of their schools, perfect freedom from dictation of or dispute with the Catholic majority, but Protestant representatives state that their people get far more than their share pro rata to population of the common educational funds of the province. All the Protestant taxation for schools goes to the Protestant schools. Of special grants the Protestants never get less than their proportion. Of cer-

tain items they get far more. "There is said Mr. Fisher, "a vote of \$80,000 for superior education. Of this \$4,000 is specifically given to Laval University, and \$2,000 is given as compensation to Protestant higher education. That is to say that the Catholics get two-thirds and the Protestants one-third, but if the division were made according to population the Protestants would get only one-eighth. The remaining \$74,000 is divided strictly according to population. All the money collected or funded from marriage licenses goes to the Protestant council because the Catholic Church marries Catholics, and takes their marriage fees. Of funds voted annually to high schools in Montreal and Quebec city, the Protestants get one-third instead of one-eighth as division according to population would give them. For normal schools the Protestants get one-half as much as the Catholics. For school inspectors the Protestants get one-fourth, instead of only their due share of one-eighth. In respect of travelling expenses the Protestant council of instruction gets first its share and then \$1,500 for which no equivalent is given to the Catholic council. In respect of journals of public instruction the Protestants receive one-fifth instead of one-eighth. The McGill or Protestant normal school gets \$3,000 for which no equivalent is given to the Catholic normal schools. And all these favors come to Protestants solely by the goodwill of a legislature overwhelmingly Catholic, though the Protestants have always more than their pro rata representation in it, because Catholic electors are so liberally inclined.

Well might Messrs. Fisher and Ames rebuke the intolerant spirit of the faction which seeks to deny the Catholics their just and legal rights in the West of Canada. No wonder the French and Catholics feel like good fellows wronged. Having lived long in Quebec province I have long known that a people more free of the persecuting spirit than French Canadians are cannot be found on the continent. That the truth should have been told about them by Protestants in Parliament will surely have happy effects. It may not shame the bigots who revile them, but it will assuredly endue the French Canadians with a new, warm sense that their truly Christian conduct is appreciated by those Protestants who know them best. The whole debate will make the Canadian races better acquainted with one another, draw them newly together and promote the progress of that mutual esteem which furthers the cause of Canadian nationality. That is what some of the Tories hope to destroy by seeking to create grave dissensions between the races and creeds of the Dominion. Fortunately a very wise, patient, far-sighted, firm statesman has been in charge of public affairs during the turmoil. It will soon end, despite all agitators, and Sir Wilfrid will be revered as Pater Patriae even more than before. The agitators, rave as they may during the Easter recess, have had their brief excited attention. They imagined Ontario with them because Toronto seemed to be. But Ontario members who have recently visited their constituencies to ascertain public sentiment declare that Ontario is weary of the rampant Toronto element. This was peculiarly testified by Mr. Geo. D. Grant, a very courteous and statesman-like young Presbyterian, born in a manse who ended his excellent speech with these healing words:

"In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I support this measure believing it necessary to keep good faith; I support it because I recognize it as based on the sure foundations of equity and fair dealing; because it honors the religious convictions of the minority without trespassing at all upon the rights of the majority, and because it appeals to me as in the true interest of all Canada, inasmuch as it makes for unity, for conciliation and for peace. Let me close by quoting words of the late Principal Grant used by him in paying a tribute to the memory of Archbishop Connolly, a reverend prelate of the Roman Catholic Church in Nova Scotia, who died during Principal Grant's term as pastor of a Presbyterian church in that province. Said Principal Grant of Archbishop

Connolly: 'He was a man of peace, ever seeking to build bridges rather than to dig ditches between men of different creeds.'

## CURRENT COMMENT

We gladly give precedence to Mr. E. W. Thompson's masterly letter on the school situation, and in doing so we beg to direct special attention to what the writer says of the Quebec system. "Not only have the Quebec Protestants absolute control of their schools, perfect freedom from dictation of or dispute with the Catholic majority"—a blessed condition in striking contrast with the ever-recurring petty tyranny of the Protestant majority in Ontario, which devotes a great part of its energy to hampering the Catholic Separate Schools and dictating to the teachers therein—but Protestant representatives state that their people get far more than their share, pro rata to population, of the common educational funds of the province." The interesting details of this injustice or unfairness on the side of charity to poor benighted misbelievers may and should be read at the end of Mr. Thompson's letter. These facts, as he truly says, "may not shame the bigots who revile Catholics, but they will assuredly endue the latter with a new, warm sense that their truly Christian conduct is appreciated by those Protestants who know them best."

Rev. Dr. Bryce committed a grave tactical error when, in his "Illustrated History of Winnipeg" he attacked men who are still alive. He would have shown more cunning had he imitated the practice of the late Charles Chiniquy who never published the names of the priests he slandered till they were reduced to silence by death. Fortunately Father Lestanc is still hale and hearty, and his reply to Dr. Bryce's foul and inexcusable slander is magnificent in its heroic simplicity. Far from having "spent the winter of '70-71 in Pembina, Dakota, planning mischief, plotting against the British crown," as Dr. Bryce writes, Father Lestanc began that cold season in such heroic devotion to half-breeds infected with the small-pox that he caught the dread disease himself, and, in spite of the weakness attendant on convalescence, spent that whole winter amid the hardships and privations inseparable from mission work at the primitive half-breed settlement of Wood Mountain, 450 miles from Pembina. The whole story, with Father McCarthy's pointed reflections, makes one understand the otherwise inexplicable purpose subserved in the scheme of Divine Providence by such unreliable writers as Dr. Bryce. Their historical errors, whether deliberate or involuntary, provoke triumphant replies which greatly contribute to the knowledge of facts. Father McCarthy is to be congratulated on his success in obtaining from Father Lestanc so crushing a refutation of a mean calumny. The witty Irish priest makes a happy hit when he says "I recollect that the mirages of the prairies in those days were marvellous, but (unless intensified by a liberal use of the 'H.B.Co's 7 years old') I never knew they could transplant a man from Qu'Appelle to Pembina." However, we must remember that one of the effects of usquebaugh is to make a man see double. Dr. Bryce's informant really saw O'Donoghue alone, but imagined that he saw another person with him, and his bigotry gave the imaginary double a name.

In a cablegram of April 20, we read:

Roderick Campbell writes to the Times challenging the statement made in Mgr. Richot's obituary notice that he did what he could to restrain his flock taking part in Riel's insurrection in 1870. It was his flock which barred McDougall's progress to enter British territory, compelling his family to return to Ottawa in the depth of a very severe winter.

Not knowing to which one of many obituary notices Mr. Roderick Campbell refers, we shall not waste our powder in