

they found it necessary to give heed to many delicate and pressing questions that grew out of the great project under consideration. Amongst these was the question of safeguarding the educational rights of the Quebec and Ontario minorities.

Already Quebec, long even before the Act of Union in 1840 had conceded to the English and non-Catholic minority their Separate or Dissident Schools and had so permitted their full development, that at the time of Confederation in 1867 the minority in Quebec possessed a complete school system of their own, from the primary school to the university—elementary schools, academies, a normal school, inspectors and a committee of the Council of Public Instruction.

So Sir John Willison in his "Reminiscences Political and Personal",\* is entirely astray where he says touching on the question of dissident schools in Quebec at the time of Confederation:

"In Ontario if a school section contained a single Roman Catholic child it could attend the Public School without impediment or embarrassment. In Quebec there were and there are still whole counties where absolutely no provision exists for the education of isolated Protestant families."

It is not possible that Sir John Willison has read the school laws of Quebec, otherwise he never would have made such a statement as the above. If Sir John's statement is true, how comes it that we learn from the Report of the Superintendent of Education for Quebec for 1916-17, page 14, that nine hundred and seventy Protestant pupils frequented the Catholic schools of the Province and two thousand and sixteen Catholic pupils attended the Protestant schools for the same year?

The fact is that in Quebec, according to the school laws, the minority even should it be a single family can declare themselves dissentients or remain with the majority and send their children to the school of the majority.

Sir John Willison says further that the Protestant teachers of Quebec, on the eve of Confederation, while the delegates were in London, sent a petition to the Throne asking for a redress of their educational grievances. Well I have already indicated that the English non-Catholic minority of Quebec, at this very time, possessed a complete School System of their own and had absolute control over it while the Separate School System of Ontario, at the same time, was simply elementary possessing neither a normal school, high schools, inspectors nor a committee of public instruction.

What could the English non-Catholic Teachers of Quebec who petitioned the Throne on the eve of Confederation have desired? Here is their grievance as set forth in their petition: "Your Majesty's subjects professing the Protestant faith are subjected to serious disadvantages: first in being deprived of the benefits of a general system of education similar to that enjoyed by their fellow-subjects in Upper Canada."

In a word the minority in Quebec though possessing a complete School System of their own and having full control of it desired to impose their views on the majority. That is really what the petition meant.

May I cite at this point a witness to the generosity and liberality with which the majority in Quebec treated the minority during the years preceding Confederation. Sir John A. Macdonald in his discussion of the Taché Separate School bill of 1855 we learn from his Memoirs, vol. I, page 170, while contrasting the Ontario and Quebec systems of education said: "The system in vogue in Quebec is more liberal than ours in Ontario in that it not only permits the establishment of Protestant Schools for Protestant children but allows the whole municipal machinery to be employed to collect the rates to maintain them."

All this time the Catholic minority of Ontario, with the Catholic Bishops

\*Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.