

faction given by the Ontario system, and in advocating generous treatment to the minority here. The Rev. Peter Wright, of Portage la Prairie, himself an Ontario teacher in past years, delivered an address on the school question in his own town last April. A full report of it was published in the Tribune, of this city. That paper, than which there is not a more staunch advocate of the present Manitoba law to be found, prefaced the report with the remark, "Mr. Wright is one of the soundest men in the Presbyterian church in the whole Northwest." And this is what Mr. Wright said: "In Ontario very excellent work is being done in many of the separate schools. The late J. of Young, when inspector of the high schools of Ontario, was asked by the government to inspect such separate schools as he conveniently could. I remember a conversation I had with him, in which he bore testimony to the excellent condition in which he found many of them." He then went on to make a powerful plea for tolerance and conciliation, urging that we should be fair and generous to the minority, while earnestly protesting at the same time against federal intervention, and insisting that under no circumstances should we submit to a restoration of the old law. Mr. Wright's words are well worth quoting: "Let us make it as easy as possible," said he, "for our representatives to be not only fair and just, but noble and generous. Encourage them to look into the alleged grievance. If it exists let them see about the remedy in a spirit as broad and generous as is compatible with the cardinal principles of our institutions—equal rights and privileges to all." And after a reference to the manner of settlement that some propose—the abolition of all religious exercises from the schools—he proceeds: "Will the Catholics then call our schools godless? Well, let them have the privilege of preparing religious exercises after their own ideas, as distinctly Catholic as they please, so long as the teaching is not subversive of civil obligation—and let these be used in every school where the trustees so determine, in lieu of the present religious exercises, and with the same limitations as to time and attendance."

I am firmly convinced, Mr. Editor, that Mr. Laurier did not overstate the fact when he said the question is "easy of solution," without federal intervention, if approached by both parties to the conflict in the

spirit that he recommends. I believe there is no such strong feeling in Manitoba as some people imagine, against making reasonable concessions on the lines suggested by their Lordships of the privy council. Certainly a proposal to restore the old system as it existed prior to 1890 would be met with the most determined opposition. And if the federal parliament were to re-enact that law, I am convinced that an attempt to enforce it would evoke a degree of hostility that would shake the very foundations of our confederation.

It would be a great mistake, however, in my judgment, to assume that there is any such feeling in Manitoba against our own legislature making concessions, such as the Rev. Mr. Wright, for instance, suggested; or against the introduction of a system based on that of Ontario, but modified in some respects so as to avoid some of the weaknesses charged against it.

Upon the question of our own legislature making reasonable concessions, it is particularly interesting to note the opinion of Mr. Joseph Martin, M.P., the ex-attorney general of Manitoba, himself the originator of the present school law.

The Hon. Mr. Oulmet, the French leader in the commons, was reported during last session of the Dominion parliament, in an interview in an Ottawa paper, to have stated that all the Roman Catholics of Manitoba asked was, "to be at liberty to add to the secular education required in the public schools such religious teaching as will meet their religious views." And he added, "If that had been provided for in the legislation of 1890 we would never have heard of the Manitoba school question."

Mr. Martin promptly wrote to the same paper, over his own signature, declaring that if Mr. Oulmet accurately stated the position of the church, then "there is no need of any remedial legislation in order to bring about such a state of affairs." "I believe," added Mr. Martin, "that the people of Manitoba would be willing to give the Roman Catholics all that is asked for. Everybody wishes that a solution of the question may be found without any coercion on the part of the Dominion parliament, and if the demands of the minority are correctly represented by the minister, I am very much at sea in my acquaintance with the views of the Manitoba people, if they will not grant of their own accord all that is asked." This is indeed strong

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