

bitter cry of those who are worsted in the battle of life mingles with the roar of the conflict. In this Dominion the question, what shall I eat? and what : all I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed? was never so anxiously debated in thousands of homes as it is to-day. Increased competition in every line of business, due to the rapid increase of our population, the partial exhaustion of some of our resources, the diminishing fertility of our soils, the wide and reckless destruction of our forests, the decay of some of our industries, the locking up of much of our capital, and the ill-paid employment of much of our labor in enterprises that can be galvanized into precarious life only by all sorts of temporary expedients, and, above all else, the ruinous waste of our national wealth through the lamentable excesses in drink, that every lover of his country deplures; all these causes, and others that might be enumerated, have brought us within sight of the time predicted by Macaulay, when hundreds of our population will rise in the morning with no sure provision for the wants of the day. Education alone, in the restricted sense of the term, will not ward off the spectres of hunger and want that threaten our ever denser populations. Legislation must do much, moral reforms must do more; most of all must be done by the beneficent influences of religion, if the well-being of the people is to be conserved and augmented. That the children of persons well to do, living in pleasant homes, with all the comforts and some of the luxuries of life, may continue to live as their parents have lived, they must be fitted better than their parents were to enter on the struggle of life. They must not only know more, it is of immeasurably greater importance that they be able to do more than their parents. Besides, if our young nation is to take its due place in the van of civilized progress, all the powers, physical, mental, and moral, of the people must be diligently cultivated.

I do not speak of the special difficulties of our position as members of the Protestant minority of this province. I do not dwell on the gradual but sure extinction of our Protestant farming communities by the inevitable operation of the tithe system. I utter no complaint of the annihilation of English political influence in Quebec, though it is an incalculable misfortune for the majority no less than for the minority, because it has been the necessary consequence of our foolish dissensions. I pass in silent sorrow that position of almost complete isolation to which, by our haughty indifference to the free interchange of thought with our fellow citizens, through the intermediation of the tongue, that was justly, as well as naturally, dear to them: we have condemned ourselves.