

in the very constitution which entitles it to consideration. Its use is sanctioned by the Parliament of the Mother Country, the fathers of Confederation, and the Parliament of Canada, and this is no mean distinction, not hastily determined.

Now, it is contended that this equality of status in Parliament signifies or is intended to signify an equality of its status in the curriculum of the schools of Canada.

The claim of the French language to a place on the school curriculum is a question of public policy—a question of what is best for those who know no other language and what is best for their future citizenship, and it is only from this standpoint that the question should be considered by the French-speaking population, to whom it is of primary importance, as well as by those responsible for our school system.

The lessons to be learned from the parliamentary sanction of the French language may, then, be summed up as follows:

(1) By permitting the use of the French language in Parliament the suspicion or apprehension that the majority was influenced by prejudice against their French compatriots was greatly modified. Is there not a similar suspicion with regard to the use of French in bi-lingual schools?

(2) The use of the French language in Parliament qualified French members to discharge their duties more efficiently by enabling them to declare intelligently their minds in all matters of legislation. Why, then, should not the teacher of a bi-lingual school be allowed the free use of the language which his pupils understand? Who ever looks for an object in the dark with an extinguished lamp?

(3) The inability to use the English language in Parliamentary debate was the result of environment for which the member was not responsible. Why should his usefulness be marred by the accident of birth or race? Why should he be prohibited as by a decree of fate from using the only language by which he could discharge his duties efficiently as a member of Parliament? Is it not so with the child at school? It is no fault of his that he was born of French parents. It is no fault of his that he speaks French. You cannot reach his mind by a language he cannot understand. By giving equivalent terms in English you make his knowledge of French a stepping-stone to a knowledge of English.

(4) The free and unrestrained use of the French language in Parliament has led to greater efficiency in the use of the English language. If both languages were taught in a bi-lingual school would not a similar result follow? You only accentuate a preference or a prejudice by discriminating against it. There is no lingual choice between conditions under which they are to be used. The conditions in Quebec favour French; in Ontario, English favour both. Restraint only tends to perpetuate what greater liberty would secure.

But it is said that Ontario is an English-speaking province, and therefore French should not be taught in our schools. By similar reasoning it might be said that Quebec is a French-speaking province, English should not be taught in the schools of Quebec. This is a painfully narrow view to take of the object of education. Education is a means to an end, and should be adapted to the needs of the whole people.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUÉ.

This character of our schools should be maintained at all hazards, and if it means anything it means that the public school should open its doors so wide that every child, irrespective of its origin, should share in its privileges on a common basis.

In my next article I propose offering some suggestions as to how this end can best be attained.

Sir Geo. W. Ross.

This was a letter written by a man of large experience in educational matters and who, as you know, was minister of Education in Ontario for several years.

For French Canadians the use of their language concerns not only the perpetuation of the race, it is "a badge of their own individuality, and necessary for the preservation of their religion."

Believe me, honourable gentlemen, not only for the sake of fair play and harmony, but in the true interest of the future of this Dominion, let each of the two races have its free expansion on this continent. Each language has been immortalized by a long series of great and brilliant writers. The civilization of the one, as that of the other, which are "the flowers of the ages" and amongst the main jewels of the world, is as necessary on this continent as on the European continent. The obliteration of either of them would be nothing short of a human catastrophe.

I have only one word more to add, it is the hope that this honourable House will be unanimous in regretting, as is so well expressed in the motion, the divisions which seem to exist among the people of the province of Ontario in connection with the bi-lingual school question, and in expressing its belief that it is in the interest of the Dominion at large that all such questions should be considered on fair and patriotic lines, and settled in such a way as to preserve peace and harmony between the different national and religious sections of this country, in accordance with the views of the Fathers of Confederation and with the spirit of our Constitution.

The application of a wide, liberal and generous spirit to the settlement of this question will be in keeping with the wise and generous policy of the British Government in dealing with such questions throughout the Empire, and with the present and I sincerely hope the enduring and everlasting entente cordiale between the two great nations, England and France, whose gigantic common and concerted efforts of blood and resources of all kinds are at present engaged at saving the civilization of the world.