

recognized by the Canadian Constitution framed in 1867 as one of the two official languages of the Dominion. It is rather late in the day to seek to deprive the French Canadians of their language, the language of one of our great Allies in the struggle for freedom, liberty and democracy. When a writer seeks to compare the language of a people to such a thing as slavery, it only shows to what lengths he is prepared to go.

The few facts that I have cited are sufficient, I believe, to show how baseless as well as unjust are the general conclusions which the writer of "Peril of Civil Strife Arises Anew in Canada" parades with so much assurance in order to make out a case against the French Canadians. The fact is that the French Canadians are being systematically maligned. A few ignorant, narrow-minded individuals would apparently like to see them deprived of their language and their religion, and Anglicized and Protestantized. These people seem to forget that the forefathers of the French Canadians were the discoverers and colonizers of Canada, that the French Canadians themselves with their fine qualities and virtues, are a most valuable asset to the Dominion, that they have given to Canada some of its greatest men, that they form a bulwark of our national life, and that anything that would injure them would damage the whole fabric of Confederation.

The expression of opinion with which the Times article concludes: "We will some day or other have to take up arms to show Quebec that Canada is an English and Protestant country and is not going to allow itself to be led by a priest-ridden province;" and: "We may allow our loyal troops from Ontario and the Western Provinces to stop long enough in Quebec on their way to Europe to practise on the French Canadians what they will afterwards give the Germans," is a good illustration of the style of reasoning of certain extremists. That attitude, however, savours too much of that "Prussianism" which all the free nations are fighting at the present time, and will be condemned by all right-thinking people.

Civil war in Canada might serve the purposes of certain extremists, but it would be both criminal and suicidal.

French Canadians number over two million souls in Canada and nearly three million in the whole of North America. For nearly four hundred years they have been here, and they are here to stay. They cannot be suppressed or Anglicized against their will. The more that is attempted the more will they be solidified and sundered from the other elements that go to make up our population.

Again I ask, can the French people of Ontario be so foolish as to refuse to obey a law which was passed entirely in their interest? That may perhaps be said in good faith; but surely no sane man would pretend that the Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of Ontario feel that this was a favour done in their interest by the Ontario Legislature. These laws ought to be repealed.

As Mr. Bullock said at Quebec, a man is a better man if he can understand both languages. I have a letter from an Ontario soldier who has been in the trenches, telling his parents how glad he was to have

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learned a little French in Ontario, how useful it had been to him in this terrible war to be able to converse with the French people in France; how often he had been called upon to interpret for his comrades from Ontario and the West in order to get some favour or privilege for them, and how he blessed the Providence that had enabled him to learn to understand the French people in that far country, and that was a great consolation to him in his hardship. This is a proof of how useful the French language is, and I cannot understand how a word can be said against the teaching of it in Ontario, or how a regulation can be put on the statute book to prevent the French people and also the English from learning that language.

If the Ontario people wish to do a favour to the French, let them do it rightly. My honourable friend says they intend to do them a favour by improving the French schools and helping them to learn the French language. If that is true—and my compatriots think it is not the right way to do it—why not grant the favour in a way that is better for them, and even the English people of Ontario would get the benefit of it; and later on, as Sir George Foster said in Toronto, they would be very glad to speak and understand the French language, and would not blush as he did in Paris. At the Toronto Canadian Club Sir George Foster, on coming back from the Paris conference, told how sorry he was to feel that he had to be dumb at that conference, not understanding a word.

In conclusion, let me say that if my remarks and the speeches of my honourable friends from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Belcourt) and Stadacona (Hon. Mr. Landry) shall have the slightest effect in Ontario, especially on my friend over there (Hon. Mr. Blain), in whom I have faith, and who has a good feeling for us, I shall be very glad, and shall feel repaid for my efforts.

Hon. Mr. DONNELLY: I did not have the privilege of hearing the addresses of the honourable member for Stadacona (Hon. Mr. Landry) and the honourable member for Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Belcourt); but in listening to the honourable member for Grandville (Hon. Mr. Choquette), I gather that he holds their view, that the people of Ontario have a great aversion to the French language, and desire to suppress it in some way. Living in the province of Ontario as I do, I desire to dissent entirely from that view. He argues on the ground that conditions in Quebec and Ontario are similar. The conditions are not the same.