

appealed to the Catholics and to all sincere and loyal citizens. It seemed to them that so just and holy a cause should soon triumph. Their teachings and their counsels are still fresh in our memory ; posterity, We are sure, will be grateful to them for what they did during those sorrowful years in behalf of an oppressed minority. Alas ! a question which might have so easily and speedily been solved according to the sole principles of natural equity, meets with numerous and unexpected complications. Borne from one tribunal to another, it was thrown into the arena of politics. There again, as it was their right and their duty, the Bishops, placing themselves above all party-interest and all political speculation, endeavoured to make the cause triumph, because then as before, it ever remained a question of conscience, and they could not forsake it. The federal law, proposed to solve the question, was foiled, and, since that moment, our country has continued to be the scene of painful strife. A new government took the place of the old one, and we learned one day that between it and the government of Manitoba, an agreement had taken place, a compromise had been concluded. That compromise was not the restitution of the rights violated ; it was not even an improvement that might be conciliated with the prescriptions of the Church so formal in this matter. How could the Episcopate have approved it ? The Bishops therefore declared it unacceptable, and the Catholics of Manitoba continued to support their own schools at the cost of the greatest sacrifices.

The situation was becoming more and more strained. The question was presented to the Pope, to that venerated Head of the Church, whom Catholics acknowledge as their Supreme Pastor, to that great diplomatist, to that master both prudent and wise, whom even they who are not his sons have chosen for the arbiter of their difficulties.

As he had already done, in similar circumstances, for other nations, Leo XIII was pleased to act as our teacher and our guide. But before expressing his judgment in so grave a matter, and in order to give satisfaction to all, the Sovereign Pontiff appointed a Delegate Apostolic, and charged him to present a report after having heard the parties interested.

Leo XIII speaks therefore to us to-day, Our dearly beloved Brethren, with a heart full of the liveliest affection, but not without having examined and maturely weighed all, confident that his word will be greeted as a word of equity and peace.