

failure to recognize the difference in kind between the public schools of Catholic Quebec and the public schools of the Protestant provinces. The latter are in principle and practice essentially secular; the former are to all intents and purposes religious and Catholic. Any religious exercise or instruction in the public schools of the Protestant provinces is so arranged that the children of the Catholic minority are not required to be present. But the public schools of the Catholic Province of Quebec are so completely under clerical control and so pervaded by Catholic ideas and influences, that to shut up Protestants to the use of them for the education of their children would be equivalent to compelling them to have their children educated under the guidance of the Catholic Church. No good Catholic can, we think, deny this, for it is the avowed and cherished principle of the Catholic Church that all education should be under the direction and control of the clergy. The result, in brief, is that by the abolition of the Separate Schools in Manitoba and Ontario Catholics would be deprived of no right enjoyed by Protestants. Both would be placed upon the same footing in regard to secular education, and religious education would be left, in the case of both, to be provided for by the respective Churches, as is now the case in New Brunswick. Will Mr. Mercier attempt to maintain that the same result would follow in Quebec from the abolition of its Separate Schools. If that can be demonstrated, all reasonable Protestants will say "Let them be abolished." Otherwise, Mr. Mercier's equal-rights argument falls to the ground.

TO what extent the charge of mediævalism so frequently brought against our fellow-countrymen of French origin is a just one, is a question of too much importance to warrant hasty conclusions. It may be true that the religious ideas of the average *habitant* are, to some extent, those of the middle ages. It is doubtless true that he is behind his English-speaking neighbour in education and enterprise, that his methods of agriculture are more crude, and that his standard of living is much lower. But to institute, on these bases, a comparison between his condition and that of the wretched serfs of feudalism, into whose hopeless existence scarcely one ray of intelligence was permitted to enter, is, to say the least, carrying our Protestant and Anglo-Saxon prejudices rather far. To go still further, and to hint, as a leading Ontario journal recently did, that Quebec may yet be the theatre of a second French Revolution, seems to us preposterous. When, a century ago, the down-trodden populace of France rose against the tyranny and oppression which for long centuries they and their fathers had endured, they pressed, through bloodshed and terrible atrocities, toward the goal of self-government. The attainment of this boon, after years of apparent defeat, was the reward and the justification of the Revolution. The people of Quebec are in full possession of self-government. They are not groaning under the pressure of an oligarchy. Their farming classes are proprietors, not tenants or serfs. The universal suffrage for which the sansculottes of Paris clamoured is practically theirs. If their ecclesiastical system is in part a hierocracy, it is a hierocracy on democratic lines. In other words, the Roman Catholic Church enjoys its peculiar powers and privileges in the Province of Quebec simply and solely because it is the will of the people that it should enjoy them. When our French compatriots wish to abolish ecclesiasticism in their Province, they have simply to record their mandate at the ballot-box and the thing is done. That the day when they will do so is not far distant there is some reason to hope.

IT is, perhaps, useless to hope for any very radical change until Quebec obtains a better system of public education. We are loth to believe that the statistics of illiteracy in that Province are so alarming as is often asserted. This is a point on which the educational reports of the Province do not shed sufficient light. We have, however, never seen it denied that a considerable proportion of the French Canadian people are unable to read and write, having either never learned, or else forgotten through want of practice. Nor could a different result be expected under a system which makes knowledge of "the three R's" subordinate to knowledge of a church catechism. The innate capabilities of the French-Canadian people are great. Dorion and Joly, Chauveau and Fr chette, Laurier and Chapleau, and scores of other brilliant natives of Quebec, are living examples of what they are able to accomplish in literature, statesmanship, and oratory. But so long as elementary education is controlled in the interests of a church the mass of the people will not

attain to the level that, under better conditions, has been reached by their fellow Canadians in the other Provinces. If our Quebec contemporaries would frankly recognize this disability, and bend their energies to its removal, they would render their Province a greater service than they can do by indiscriminately branding as Francophobes and haters of the Catholic Church all who point it out. We are glad to see some signs of an awakening. In his recent speech before the Club National at Montreal, Premier Mercier declared that the people of the Province were demanding better educational facilities, and that it was the intention of his Government to grant them. We hope that the Premier was sincere in this utterance. It seems impossible that he can be at heart an Ultramontane, and we believe he will yet come to regard the sacrifice of his Liberal principles to greed for office as the great mistake of his life. None the less if he takes measures to modernize and render more efficient the school system of Quebec, he may yet cover a multitude of political sins by his agency in uplifting his compatriots to a higher plane of intelligence.

WE have complied with the request contained in Mr. Wiman's letter in another column, and have carefully re-read the documents he has kindly sent us. THE WEEK can have no interest to serve in misrepresenting Mr. Wiman or any other public man, and it certainly has no desire to do so. In the paragraph, a portion of which Mr. Wiman quotes, we selected two sentences which have been often used by hostile critics, with others of a similar kind, in support of the contention that he is insincere in his strong expressions of opinion before Canadian audiences that Commercial Union would not necessarily tend to Annexation, and that before American audiences he utters sentiments of a very different character. Most of our readers will, no doubt, have read the report of Mr. Wiman's evidence before the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, and perhaps also that of his lecture in St. Paul, at the time of their first appearance, but they may, like ourselves, have forgotten the connection in which those now threadbare sentences occurred. Perhaps we cannot better serve the ends of justice than by reproducing portions of the paragraphs in which those sentences are found, and leaving it to the candid and discerning to judge between Mr. Wiman and his critics in the matter. The passage from the *St. Paul Globe* reads as follows:

"The independence of Canada from a fiscal point of view gives her an enormous advantage, and if England did refuse to permit her to take the step in the direction of unrestricted trade with the United States, nothing could occur in the whole history of the connection that would so soon sever the relations that exist. But no such thought is in the minds of the people of Canada. Those in Canada or England who look deepest consider that a contented, prosperous and great people, trading with their best customers without restriction, are much more likely to be loyal to existing conditions than a people hemmed in and isolated, and their country forever doomed to be bound up in swaddling clothes. On the other hand, there are Americans who believe that with enlarged trade and social intercourse, and with the attractions of the great republic freely and fully opened to this country in the north, it could not longer resist the attractive forces which here prevail towards a political absorption. These great problems may well be left for the future to take care of."

The other quotation is taken, it appears, from the *New York Herald's* ten-line report of Mr. Wiman's evidence before the Senate Committee above referred to. The part of the official report of that evidence which includes the sentence most nearly resembling that in question is as follows:

"The Canadians are very loyal, but they want to sell what they can to America and buy all they can, if cheaper than from England. Commercial Union is regarded by some as a short cut to Annexation. Others regard Commercial Union as a preventive of Annexation. If you have faith in the attractiveness of the institutions of this country, perhaps you can thus win Canada; they may want, however, to govern themselves. The future must take care of itself."

TWO things we feel in candour bound to add in reference to the foregoing. First, that the passages above quoted can scarcely be taken as fairly representing the general tenor of Mr. Wiman's utterances on those two occasions in reference to the point at issue. That general tenor was, we are free to admit, that all thought of Canadian annexation in the present or the near future might as well be banished from the American mind. Second, we have been strongly impressed, in re-reading the evidence before the Interstate Commerce Committee, with the fact that Mr. Wiman did on that occasion render a signal service to Canada and Canadian railroads, by putting before the

influential American senators the present facts and views, which were manifestly new to them, and by which they seem to have been considerably impressed. The extent of Canada, her great natural wealth, the benefits conferred on the United States by her trade and her railroads, and above all, the sturdy independence of her people, their loyalty to their own institutions, and the utter futility of any attempt to coerce them into annexation—all these were set forth with a clearness and force which had undoubtedly much to do with warding off the threatened embargo on international railroad commerce. All this we may say as a matter of personal justice, without in the least committing ourselves to any approval of the scheme of which Mr. Wiman is so enthusiastic an advocate. We have never concealed our opinion of the mutual commercial benefits that would result to the two countries from unrestricted intercourse. But there are surely higher considerations than any pertaining to trade. There are stronger obligations than those which impel a people to seek to extend their commerce and increase their wealth. It has always seemed to us clear that it is useless to talk about Unrestricted Reciprocity between Canada and the United States on any other terms than those of Commercial Union. Mr. Wiman evidently does not believe it possible on easier conditions. But the dream of the Commercial Unionist is, as Mr. Wiman himself plainly states, to lift up the barbed-wire fence which now runs across the centre of the continent, separating the two nations, and "to place it right around the continent," having first made it uniform in height with that which protects the coast of the United States from foreign traffic. Not only so, but, as he also admits, the height of this fence must thereafter be regulated by the American Congress, as representing the larger nation. Until, then, Mr. Wiman can persuade the Canadian people, to whose independence of spirit and thorough-going loyalty he testifies, that the latter of the two things thus involved in Commercial Union is consistent with their own self-respect, and the former with their duty to the Mother Country, all purely commercial advantages will be paraded in vain. By these two tests he may judge of the magnitude of the task he has undertaken.

AN important decision, bearing on the legality of "trusts," was recently rendered by the New York Supreme Court, in the case of the Attorney-General of the State against the North River Sugar Refining Company. A decision had already been pronounced in a lower Court, to the effect that the charter of the Company had been forfeited by the relinquishment of corporate responsibilities involved in the formation of a "trust." The case was carried before the Supreme Court on appeal. That Court now declares that it is clear that the purpose of the Trust was to make money by destroying competition, controlling the product, and regulating the price, and holds that a jury would be justified in concluding that the Trust was designed to promote its interests by limiting supply and advancing prices. To conclude otherwise would be, the judgment says, "to violate all the observations and experiences of practical life." The Court declares that a combination intended to remove competition, and increase the cost of the necessities of life, "is subjected to the condemnation of the law, by which it is denounced as a criminal enterprise." It is thought probable that the case will be taken to the Court of Appeals. But for the present the usefulness of this particular Trust is gone. Moreover, the judgment pronounced is based on principles so broad and inclusive as to be, if sustained, of general application. There can be no doubt that it will lead to an immediate renewal of the warfare against Trusts all along the line in New York, and probably in other States. The case of the great Standard Oil Trust, the colossus of its species, will, it is said, be taken up next, and suit will be brought against one or more of the New York corporations associated with this Trust.

AMONGST the week's news are reports of two events of considerable political importance, which have recently taken place in Central and South America, respectively. We referred not long since to indications that from time to time have appeared, showing that the central and southern portions of this continent were becoming increasingly sensitive to the influences brought to bear upon them from the more progressive countries of the world, and that responsive movements and tendencies were making themselves apparent. We know too little as yet of the character of the operating causes which have brought about the sudden and somewhat unexpected revolution in Brazil, to be able to judge to what extent the change is in the direction of liberal ideas and general progress. If the