

invigorating element of minorities, whether religious or racial. For my part, if I did not value as much as I do harmony between all races in the interest of this country, I would rejoice at all causes of complaint given to the French or to the Catholic minorities. I would be sure that it would be the best guarantee of their continued strength and healthy condition.

Thank heaven it is in human nature that the same persistence and tenacity be employed in resisting and repelling what one believes to be an injustice, and this applies especially in social and religious matters. Ireland and Poland are living proofs of the truth of my contention.

Lord Elgin, while Governor of Canada in 1847 or 1848, wrote to the Secretary of Colonies as follows:

I am very anxious to hear that you have taken steps for the repeal of so much of the Act of Union as imposes restrictions on the use of the French language. The delay which has taken place in giving effect to the promise made, I think by Gladstone, on this subject, is one of the points of which Papineau is availing himself for purposes of agitation. I must, moreover, confess, that I for one am deeply convinced of the impolicy of all such attempts to denationalize the French. Generally speaking they produce the opposite effect from that intended, causing the flame of national prejudice and animosity to burn more fiercely. But suppose them to be successful, what would be the result? You may perhaps "Americanize," but, depend upon it, by methods of this description you will never "Anglicize" the French inhabitants of the province. Let them feel, on the other hand, that their religion, their habits, their prepossessions, their prejudices if you will, are more considered and respected here than in other portions of this vast continent, who will venture to say that the last hand which waves the British flag on American ground may not be that of a French Canadian?

Lord Elgin.

He was a great Governor who knew and appreciated the aspirations of the French Canadians and was always ready to deal fairly with them.

Let me now read a letter from Sir George W. Ross:

Are we acting wisely in our treatment of bi-lingual education? I freely admit the importance of an English education to every citizen of Canada. English is the chief business and professional language of Canada, and the want of it is doubtless a handicap upon every person who has to earn a livelihood in competition with his fellow-Canadians. In another sense, the want of it is as great a loss. In every province except Quebec a knowledge of Canadian affairs, of the growth and progress of Canada, of its public men and its public interests, is to be obtained chiefly through the English press.

For these reasons it is desirable that every Canadian should at least be able to read and

write intelligently in the English language. To encourage a desire for this knowledge should not be considered a reflection upon the mother tongue of any nationality.

The survival of the French language in Canada, notwithstanding the constitutional changes of one hundred and fifty years and the large growth of the English-speaking population, is a factor to be considered in dealing with bi-lingual schools. It shows a love for a distinctive feature of racial origin seldom exhibited by any other people under similar circumstances.

To the French-Canadian his tongue is his dearest heritage, not because he has any longings for the restoration of French supremacy in Canada, but because he considers it a badge of his individuality and necessary for the preservation of his religion in a country that was once his own and in which he reigned supreme. If, then, the love of the French Canadian for his mother tongue is sacrosanct, if it means to him all that he need know of speech, and, in some cases, all he cares to know, the advantages of another language must be presented in a form that appeals to his personal interest as a man and a citizen.

The survival of the French language in Canada has also its historical side. By the Quebec Act of 1774, Roman Catholics were guaranteed the free exercise of their religion, and their ancient customs as to property and civil rights. French was the language of the courts to which they looked for justice. No other language was required for purpose of business or devotion. When Lower Canada was constituted a separate province in 1791 French became the language of government and legislation, and thus French became interwoven with the very texture of their religious, political and social lives.

When Lower Canada became united with Upper Canada in 1841 the French race, and for that matter the Saxon also, was obliged to take a wide outlook of public life.

The equality of both languages in debate and in everything that pertained to the duties and procedure of Parliament was afterwards reaffirmed by the British North America Act of 1867.

Now what has been the effect of the use of the French language in Parliament on terms of equality with English?

Forty years ago when I was first a member of the House of Commons, we had five French-speaking members for every one we have now. Not that the French members have lost their love for the French language, but because (greatly to their credit) French members of Parliament as a rule, have become good English as well as French scholars, and so can express themselves as well in English, though perhaps not so fluently, as in their mother tongue; as witness Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Lemieux, Monk, Bourassa, Lavergne, as well as Speaker Landry, ex-Speaker Dandurand, Béique, David, Belcourt, and others of the Senate. Without being unduly critical, I venture to say that not a few English-speaking members would suffer by comparison with their French compatriots in the use of clear, concise and expressive English. The earmark of the French speaker is his accent, not his want of vocabulary.

Now what does this historical sketch signify? Clearly that the French language has a status