

is no disposition whatever to prevent the use of the French language, to drive it from the schools or prevent the people from learning it. The French language is admitted to be a splendid language—even English people are obliged to go to it to find a single word to express an idea that we could not express in less than half a dozen words in English. I do not think there is anything in the clause to warrant any feeling of this kind being manifested. We have no desire to annoy or to encroach upon the rights of our French fellow-citizens or to cast any slur or slight upon their language at all. It would be impossible for us, even if we wished to do such a thing, to lower the general estimate of the French language throughout the world. It stands on a pedestal, whence it cannot be displaced. It seems to me, however, that the people do not want French as an official language in the North-West. We are a practical people, and do not allow sentiment to interfere with anything that is required as a benefit to the country. In our Western Territories there is a growing population, who feel that they have not been quite properly treated by this Legislature in having the French language forced upon them. For my own part, while it may be expedient, and probably the only thing that can be done at present, to accept the proposed proviso and amendment which we have before us added to the section, I must honestly confess that my desire would have been to move in amendment to strike out the whole of the latter compulsory part of the clause, and leave it simply enacting either the English or French language may be used in the debates of the Assembly and before the courts. The fact is, the mistake was made by this Parliament when we undertook to say "You shall use the French language." There is where the mistake was. It was in forcing upon the people a language that they did not want.

HON. MR. POWER—The Act does not say "they shall."

HON. MR. VIDAL—It says "Both those languages shall be used, and the proceedings and records shall be printed in both languages." Surely that is positive enough, and that is the point where I find fault with our legislation undertaking to force upon the people a requirement of that nature. It

should be left to themselves, as we propose now, and instead of putting it off to a future day I would prefer taking off the Statute-book an injunction which I consider has no right there. Still, it is possible that the proposed method may be a better way, more agreeable to those who are affected by it, and I do not wish to stand in the way of effecting a compromise, although I cannot see the propriety of insisting upon maintaining a condition of things which is not adapted to the circumstances of the people. As far as the necessity for dual language is concerned, I believe there is no disputing the fact that there are very few of those who use the French language in the North-West Territories and who are able to read and write, who do not read, write and speak the English language as freely as the French, so that they do not need that change. Then, if we admit the right of the people to have the proceedings carried on in their own tongue, it appears to me quite as proper to say that those proceedings should be published in the Cree language; for I am under the impression that there is more of the Cree language spoken there than French. On these grounds, therefore, there is no necessity whatever for imposing that requirement upon them, that they should use the French language, and I do not think that our French-speaking fellow citizens should feel so sore upon the matter, when there is no intention on our part to encroach upon their rights or privileges. My name indicates that my own forefathers were French or Spanish, and I must say that I have felt no great violence has been done to me in making me learn the English language and adopt English sentiments. While I do not think the French language should die out, still, in time it will be found that this is an English Dominion, and that the English language must be of necessity both the common and official language of the people. It is already noted that a large number of French Canadian people have moved over to the New England States, but we do not find any alterations of the language used in the records of legislative proceedings or in the courts in consequence. There is no official recognition of the French language there, and there is no necessity felt for it. We find in other places under British rule a great many people who speak a different language from the English, yet there never was any demand