

an orator in Parliament or in any public meeting alludes to the "Conquest," he is almost sure to awaken a protest from some quarter. "He should not have said conquest, we were not conquered; we were ceded by France to England; it was not a conquest, but a cession"; and so on. In my opinion this is mere childishness; I cannot see that it is more humiliating to suffer defeat when crushed by numbers, than to be shamefully abandoned by one's own. To make such distinctions is only playing with words. For, whether we were ceded or conquered, the treaty was imposed on France by force of arms and against our will; the difference, if difference there be, is so slight that it does not merit more serious notice.

Nevertheless in deference to such susceptibilities, I will withdraw the word, and say that to judge adequately of the position held by the French Canadians in the present case, one must not fail to take into consideration the feeling common to all people who have lost their national existence. This feeling is the quiet, unavowed and unconscious, but instinctive expectation of some reaction ever cherished, ever dreamed of, and secretly nourished by some undefined hope of future emancipation. Even in the case of races decimated by subjection, this never dies out: how can it then be absent from the hearts of French Canadians, who, instead of gradually diminishing in number, have, on the contrary, developed and multiplied in the most extraordinary manner under the British *régime*?

For their *le fait accompli* has never been accepted with all its consequences. They loyally pledged allegiance to England, and they have loyally held to their pledge; but never did they hold that that pledge bound them to be and remain English, fastened to England now and forever. Not that they in any way entertain the slightest hope or desire to resume their former allegiance to France; but they feel themselves French, they are proud to be so, and are bound to remain so. On this free soil of America, where all races are invited to a common feast of concord, progress and equality in friendly emulation, they have at heart other ambitions than the ambition of eternally bearing the yoke of betrayed or conquered people, tamely linked to the fortunes of a nation whose greatness they may admire, but which is not and cannot be anything to them, and which, by the influence of tradition, they cannot but instinctively consider in a vague way as the "hereditary enemy."

It is natural enough that English Canadians, who are bound to England by tradition, by intellectual association and by nationality,