

Letters on the Ottawa School Question

I.

OTTAWA, February 23, 1914.

MOST REV. CHARLES H. GAUTHIER, D. D.,
Archbishop of Ottawa.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE:

In an editorial in "*Le Droit*" of February 19th, it is asked why "Mr. Mackell and his friends" did not submit their grievances to the Archbishop of Ottawa, and it is added that the notice of Resolution re Separation at the last meeting of the Ottawa Separate School Board was an insult to Your Grace.

We protest and appeal against this and similar insinuations made in "*Le Droit*" concerning the Resolution. We need hardly say that last fall, when the reckless manner, in which the French trustees were about to rush through the \$350,000 financially disastrous debenture, threatened the Separate Schools of Ottawa with bankruptcy and disruption, the English Committee of the Separate School Trustees called a meeting on November 5th, 1913, in St. Patrick's Lyceum to discuss the question with the English-speaking city parish priests. At this meeting were present seven English trustees—(the two other English trustees had previously ceased coming to meetings of the English section, and, as events have proved, did not represent the views of their English-speaking electors) and the five English-speaking city parish priests. At that meeting it was unanimously decided: 1st, that Separation of the Bilingual and the Separate Schools proper under two independent Boards with independent finances, was the only remedy; 2nd, that Messrs. Mackell and Lanigan should acquaint the Archbishop of Ottawa with the details of the meeting, and ask him to use his influence with the government to obtain the necessary legislation; 3rd, that Messrs. Mackell and Lanigan should go to Toronto to acquaint the government with the desire and need of Separation; 4th, that failing everything else, the matter should be placed before the Apostolic Delegate.

In accordance with the wishes of that meeting we saw Your Grace, and Your Grace far from disapproving of the Separation asked for, gave us reason to hope, that you would do what you could to obtain it. We likewise went to Toronto and interviewed the Minister of Education, from whom we received no decided answer.

We enclose a copy of the Resolution asking the government for legislation for Separation, a Resolution of which notice was given at the February meeting of the School Board. We include also the Motives of this Resolution, and a Statement showing its Reasonableness and Justice. Both these documents have appeared in full in the city press; we have slightly modified the form of motive No. 3, but the argument is strengthened rather than weakened.

We include also some extracts from editorials in "*Le Droit*" which are scandalously unfair to the English speaking trustees and their supporters. We include finally an extract of a Memoir on the Ottawa School Question presented to Mgr. Sbarretti, Papal Delegate, in 1906. This document contains a reliable history of the English French trouble in Ottawa up to that date.

We claim that a perusal of the (a) Resolution, (b) "*Motives for Resolution*", (c) "*the Statement showing its Reasonableness*" will show that the English Committee base their claim on the inalienable parents' rights, a right defended by the Catholic Church. The present forced partnership of the English Separate and Bilingual Schools does not allow the English speaking Catholics of Ottawa, and of many other places, a full exercise of the right, but permits rather a sort of legalized robbery.

We appeal to Your Grace:—

1st, to forbid "*Le Droit*", a French Catholic paper of Ottawa which professes obedience to you, from publishing any more scandalously unfair articles against the English speaking trustees and Catholics. 2nd, to use your influence