

cannot be denied. It has been clearly established in very eloquent and forcible speeches and pleas by our colleague, the Honourable Mr. Belcourt, and several other gentlemen, Irish, English and French. It has been officially admitted by the commission of six inspectors appointed by the Department of Public Instruction, to report upon the operation of the by-law. That commission was composed of three (3) French-Canadians and three (3) English-Canadians, who unanimously reported as follows:

We consider the by-law as an attempt to gradually eliminate the French language from the English-French schools.

That such was the object and would be the effect of the by-law has been so frankly admitted by some of the most important advocates of the by-law, that I consider useless to insist now on that point.

Is the by-law legal or constitutional? It is a big question, upon which the Privy Council will pronounce before long and which I prefer not to discuss now. I rather wish to place myself on the larger and higher ground of patriotism and of public interest, of fair play, justice and conciliation, and express views which cannot be contested.

It cannot be denied that the new by-law has changed the condition of the French in the schools of the province of Ontario and that it is a cause of agitation, of national friction which must be deplored by all those who love their country and are convinced that peace and harmony between the different creeds and nationalities of Canada are necessary for its welfare and prosperity and for its future. And if there was ever a time when feelings of fraternity should prevail in Canada, it is the present time, when our mother countries are fighting so heroically on the battlefields of Europe for the triumph of right and justice, and cementing their alliance in the blood of their brave soldiers, in the interest of civilization and humanity, in order to restore to certain weak nations and states their natural rights. There is no doubt, hon. gentlemen, that one of the main results of the present war will be the partition of Europe, based upon the principle of nationalities, the restoration to those small peoples of their national life.

Will there be only one country, only one province where national friction will continue to exist and will that province be the great, prosperous and intelligent province of Ontario? Will Canada alone give

the example of national and religious quarrels, so detrimental to its welfare and progress? I cannot better express the views and feelings of reasonable people on that question than by quoting what has been said and published by eminent men and important newspapers of different creeds and nationalities. I have beside me the speech of Sir John A. Macdonald, the great chieftain of the Conservative party, whom all the Conservatives so much loved and admired. I cannot help quoting what he said on the same question in his speech as reported in the debates of the House of Commons in the year 1890, page 894:

In a few remarks I made the other night I intended to have called the attention of my hon. friends from the province of Ontario to what was the action of the province of Upper Canada in 1793, but I was tired, and held it over for another opportunity.

I will call attention to it now, to show what was the feeling of the people of Upper Canada a century ago. By a very unwise measure, although introduced by a very great man, Mr. Pitt in 1790, the old province of Quebec was divided into two—Upper and Lower Canada. It was thought that matters would be simplified by keeping the French in one corner of this vast country, and the English in another, and they divided the province of Quebec into provinces. From that unwise measure came most of our troubles. The Legislature met in 1791 at Newark, afterwards Niagara, and was composed of Englishmen. They were severed from the French, but they had a colony of French on the western frontier of the province of Canada, what is now the county of Essex. These Frenchmen were few in number, but their rights were protected at the second meeting of the Legislature of Upper Canada. The province was a small one and poor, and could not afford even to print the proceedings of its Legislature; but the people regarded the feelings of their fellow-countrymen. Let me read the resolution, which is still in manuscript. The original volume will be found in our library. This is the order of June 3, 1793:

"Ordered that such Acts as have already passed, or may hereafter pass the Legislature of this province be translated into the French language for the benefit of the inhabitants of the western district of this province and other French settlers who may come to reside within this province, and that A. McDonald, Esq., of this House, member for Glengarry, be likewise employed as a French translator for this or other purposes."

Now, this is the inference he drew from that resolution, and which is better stated than anything I can say:

Are we, one hundred years later, going to be less liberal to our French-Canadian subjects than the few Englishmen, United Empire Loyalists, who settled Ontario. No, Sir. This resolution would cause shame on men who tried to deprive our French friends in the province of Ontario of the privilege given them a hundred years ago by a body of men altogether speaking