

The Catholic Weekly Review.

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA

Reddite que sunt Cesaris, Cesaris; et que sunt Dei, Deo.—Matt 22: 21.

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Notes.

Mr. Laurier in his speech last Monday evening dealt in a very felicitous way with the question of the teaching of French in the public schools of Ontario. "Men there are amongst you," he said, "who tell you that it is dangerous to Confederation that the French language should be spoken in this country of ours. Well, Mr. Chairman, I am a French-Canadian; I was brought up on the knees of a French mother; and my first recollections are those recollections which no man ever forgets; and shall it be denied to me—the privilege of addressing the same language to those who are dear to me? Shall I not continue to speak French as French was spoken to me in my younger days? I know very well, Mr. Chairman, that it is a great disadvantage for a French-Canadian not to speak English. I understand that my friend, Mr. Ross, is to compel all pupils to learn English, and he will do a great service to all the children of this country. But I believe that Mr. Ross will not prohibit anybody from speaking the language of his mother if he chooses to speak it. I simply claim the privilege of speaking my own domestic language as I like to speak it. But men who speak French on this Continent are in a great inferiority, and if they are to learn to speak English the consequences will be that they will speak two languages, and the advantage will be all on their side."

"The advantage will be all on their side"—Mr. Laurier thus happily hits the question on the head. In requiring the pupils of all public schools in the Province to learn English, the Legislature, so far from subjecting them to any hardships, will render a service to the children of French-Canadian origin. This bears out, we beg to remind our readers, what the Commissioners appointed by the Minister of Education reported in respect to the French schools of the Province,

namely, that all classes of the French people expressed themselves invariably not only as willing, but as desirous that their children should learn English; and furthermore, that the use of French text books arose from no desire to exclude the English language from the schools. The simple fact appears to be as *La Minerve* claimed some time ago, that the French have always proved themselves more ready to learn English than have the English to learn French, and that to that extent they have the advantage over their English-speaking neighbours. Were the latter, *La Minerve* believed, to show an equal readiness to acquire the use of French they would speedily come to regard the Lower Canadian with less suspicion.

The anti-Jesuit gentlemen continue to go from one absurdity to a greater one. A dispatch to the *Mail* of Thursday announces that the Montreal Presbytery, representing the Presbyterian Church, has taken a stand against the acceptance of the \$60,000 by the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction in Quebec. The Committee on Education thus reported to the Presbytery:

"With respect to the reputed action of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction regarding the Jesuits' Estates Act, and the acceptance of \$60,000 offered to the Protestants, the Presbytery protest against the action of the committee as unjustifiable because acquiescing in the principle of the said Act, and as dangerous to the best interests of education, and especially to the institutions that may be made to participate in the revenue derived from said sum."

The recommendation was strongly supported, it appears, by the Rev. Principal McVicar. It would be difficult to conceive of anything more absurd in its character. The Legislature enacts that \$60,000 shall be placed at the disposal of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction. Principal McVicar and the Presbytery demand of the Committee that the sum be rejected. In other words, they call upon the Committee, which exercises special functions by will of the Legislature, to defy the power that created it. The Committee has no authority other than that conferred upon it by the Legislature. It exists only as its agent, and at its pleasure. To suppose that the Committee of Instruction can alter the statute which places the \$60,000 at its disposal, or can refuse to discharge its duties under the law, and to the Legislature that created it, is about the most absurd, of many absurd things, that the agitators have contended for.

The Pope a short time ago sent a little present of £8 to the mother of a boy wounded by the bomb in Piazza Colonna. Needless to say that this kind act, says the *Weekly Register*, is announced by the devout Press under the inevitable, and large capitals "Pontifical Munificence."