

it, then, that efforts are constantly made to deprive the people of this Dominion of this advantage? Should the views of this class of our community be carried out, Canada, with one-third of its population of French origin, would be about the only country from which French would be banished. Happily, the majority of the people of this country have always considered French as a necessity for all, and the use of it a right which the French speaking population of this Dominion enjoy.

It is a pleasure to me to be in a position to congratulate the Mowat Administration, as well as the majority of the people of Ontario, on the noble stand they have always taken, and especially during the last Session of their Legislature, on this important question. What a difference between the large, tolerant and patriotic sentiments expressed by the leader of the Government of that Province and by his colleagues and supporters, and the narrow-minded views of their adversaries on the Opposition side! The Mowat Government stood for fair play and justice to all, while the Opposition advocated intolerance and tyranny.

Let me quote some sentences from the speeches on both sides.

The Minister of Education, Hon. G. W. Ross, made a masterly speech on this question on the 25th March last. In reply to the Opposition, he said :

"Their pretensions were a violation of the privileges guaranteed to Roman Catholics * * * Separate schools were as prosperous as the public schools. If such views were entertained in Quebec against Protestants, there would at once be a cry of persecution raised * * * He urged the House to defeat that proposed amendment to the British North America Act, tinkering with which, he said, the Liberal party would never allow."

The leader of the Opposition, Mr. Meredith, followed. He said :

"He thought the House in duty bound to consider the evidence produced by the Opposition against such encroachments of the hierarchy. The question was : Is the hierarchy in the government of their denominational schools acting prejudicially to the best interests of their Province?"

Hon. C. F. Fraser said :

"That the member who had preceded him had started all right, but before he closed it had become manifest that he was appealing to a certain class in the Province. He had alluded to the hierarchy. It was palpably evident he aimed at the abolition of the separate schools. He said the hon. gentleman seemed to lose sight of the fact that if the separate schools were abolished, the Roman

Catholics would not be forced to send their children to Protestant schools. It was a matter of conscience with them. There were no laws compelling Catholics to send their children to public schools; there were no such laws in any civilized community on the habitable globe. * * * He accused the leader of the Opposition of sowing dissension among the people, by raising these questions of race and religion."

Mr. Craig also spoke on this subject, and denounced the Minister of Education and the Government for their policy on the separate school question, and on the teaching of French in those schools. He criticised the use of the catechism and other Catholic books.

Hon. Mr. Mowat, Premier of Ontario, in his reply, said :

"A great deal was gained by having the French language in their schools. It was necessary for the French to learn their own tongue. * * * * If the course suggested by the Opposition speakers were taken, it would drive the French away from their schools. * * * The hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meredith) was merely trying to gain political capital out of the cry he was raising against the French. * * * Their people (the English speaking portion) would not suffer themselves to be deprived of their schools, and no one would blame the French for feeling an affection for cultivating their language. * * * He respected them all the more for their love of language and a desire to bring up their children in the ways of their native land. * * * The object of the Opposition was not to promote the learning of English, but simply to gain votes."

One more quotation from a French Tory newspaper, and I will continue my remarks. *Le Canada* says :

"A political party in Ontario (the Tories) which we, the French Canadians, have always stood by, have left us to join the third party, the Equal Righters. * * * Mr. Meredith, who never had better friends than we were to him, believing that he would sooner get what he was anxious to have, power, turned his back on us and tried to injure us by having separate schools abolished and our language banished. But Mr. Mowat, for whom we never had any feeling but indifference, if not hostility, came to our help. Desirous to do what was right and equitable, he did so at the risk of injuring his Government and his party. Any French Canadian who would refuse to vote and work for this party, would be a coward and a renegade, if not a fool. He should not be looked upon any more as a French Canadian. Let all of us forget the political party to which we belong. Let us fight for the preservation of our rights. Home rulers have set us an example. They left the Tories for whom they had done so much and joined Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Mowat is the Gladstone of Canada; he has shown his courage, his good judgment, his large views and his generous eloquence. Could we now refuse help to those who have helped us in time of danger? Have French Canadians of our days degenerated? Should they so refuse help, would they not resemble the viper of the fable, biting those who revived it?"

The quotations which I have read show that French is the only universal language, and that learned and intelligent men in every quarter of the globe favor its diffusion.