

education. It had usually considered it was doing its duty in administering the schools under its supervision and in giving the Government expert advice when wanted; it had never agitated in controversial matters, even to improve education. But public opinion was thoroughly stirred up and leadership was so evidently needed from those who were responsible for Protestant education, that the Protestant Committee broke away from its traditions and is sending representatives to these meetings of the Federated Committee to plan a public campaign. Such a lead was all the more useful in view of the harm that might be done, not only to the cause of a compulsory law but to educational interests in general in Quebec, by the campaign for national schools.

During the spring months this nationalist campaign was opened in Ottawa. The promoter of the debate in the Senate said two of his main purposes were to give Quebec an attendance law and to secure more of a national spirit in education. The effort to secure more of union and the strength of a national spirit is in itself commendable, if it does not destroy existing systems or abolish local control. Such a union of hearts is not necessarily bound up with a uniform system of schools. Any movement towards a national spirit must reckon with essential differences and existing conditions; it is just here that nationalist theorizing breaks away from solid foundations and builds castles in the air. The promoters expect too much of the schools. The sphere of the school is circumscribed by public opinion; when we analyze society we find the school is only one of the several educating agencies. Public opinion, the press, and the Church are all doing the same work of forming ideas. The ideals which the school is striving for must not be in opposition to those of the community, or the school will break down, and will become the scene of an eternal round of petty squabbles between teachers and parents. The leaders of this nationalist campaign do not seem to realize that the facts of the case here in Quebec are all against the realization of their dream of national schools as the agency for bringing about a union of hearts.