

I have already given the interpretation, which I think is the right interpretation, to this clause, an interpretation sustained by the practical interpretation given by Mr. Colquhoun in the Windsor case. And in the face of these things I can only conclude, and I state without fear of contradiction, that the privilege of having French taught as the subject of study can exist only in the schools where French was taught before the regulation was passed. My hon. friend for Frontenac has cited Regulation 15. That regulation provides for the teaching of German and French. But my contention is that, since the passing of Regulation 17, although the other regulation remains on the statute-book, one part of it at least has become inoperative, that part dealing with the French language. The only part of Regulation 15 which is still in force is the part which deals with German. We are to-day confronted with this state of things. Around Verdun, in France, on the one side people talking the German language are directing shells and gas against another people whose language is French. And to-day in this country, or at least in Ontario, we find privileges given to the language of the Huns which are refused to the language of those who are defending the altars of civilization.

I believe that no matter how you twist this regulation, no matter how cleverly you put it, you can come to only one conclusion, that its object is the gradual proscription of the French language in the province of Ontario. The hon. member for Frontenac calls it a concession, and says that the French Canadians never had as many privileges as those contained in Regulation 17. On the other hand, it is pointed out that there are people in Ontario who think that too much is given to the French Canadians by this regulation. Then the matter can be easily settled. If, on the one hand, it is thought that the French Canadians get too much; if, on the other hand, the French Canadians do not like this regulation, do not care for this present from the Greeks, the matter can be easily settled by abolishing the regulation altogether, and then both sides—call them extremists if you like—will be satisfied. If you refuse to do that it is because you do not believe that you have given to the French a concession. The hon. member for Frontenac has a very peculiar way of dealing with a problem of this kind. On the one hand he says: "This state of things was arrived at after proper resolutions had

been passed in the Legislature of Ontario, and nobody made any complaint, even the representatives of your race did not make any complaint; therefore, you have no right to come and say that this regulation is oppressive or abusive." On the other hand, after dealing with the matter from other aspects, he comes back to the same subject, and, notwithstanding his former statements, says: "Why are you condemning this? You do not know its effect; you have not tried it out." If we try it out we accept it. If the hon. member for Frontenac claims that we have accepted a state of things by reason of silence, if we try it out he will come and say: "Not only have you accepted it, silently, by not raising a voice against it, but you have accepted it practically, because you have used it."

I was very glad to hear the Prime Minister yesterday say that if ever there was a motion proposing interference by the Federal Government in the provincial politics of the province of Quebec, he would be the first to raise his voice in protest against it. I believe, however, that he will never be put to that test, because in the province of Quebec the minority, which is English-speaking, is our star witness in this case. That minority is in a position to teach the people of Canada at large that the French Canadian majority knows something about justice, about tolerance, and about equity.

It has been insinuated, even affirmed, that the French Canadian population contain a greater proportion of illiterates than any other race in Canada. I have always thought that, if we know how to apply justice, if we know how to deal with questions of that kind in such a way as to deserve the compliment of being the province which has understood better than any other the spirit of the Canadian Confederation, possibly it was because many of our men had given some time to the study of the treaties and to the study of our constitution and of such books as would instruct them in the science of justice. But even if we have to admit that there are among us so great a number of illiterates, compliment my race all the more, because then it has not acquired that science of justice by tuition or by education, but has possessed it naturally from birth.

The best test to apply to this regulation is to transpose it. I would recommend every member from Ontario who does not share my views to take a copy of this regul-