

the people are not aware of the causes of friction or the contention of the French-Canadian in so far as their rights are concerned and do not understand this question, and he thinks some means should be inaugurated whereby the questions should be made clear and perfectly understood. What he suggests may or may not be practicable, but I read the letter simply to show the view, which I am sure is the view of a vast number of large, broad-minded thinkers such as he is. The letter reads as follows:—

March 11, 1915.

Dear Senator Edwards,

I see by the morning paper that Senator David brought forward in the Senate yesterday, what I suppose might be termed Ontario's bi-lingual question, and I noticed that you are to continue the debate.

May I be permitted to lay before you some views I entertain concerning this, as well as other sectional differences. I fear that many of us in this country do not fully appreciate the fact that races of people, like individuals, have their peculiarities and that it is easier to harmonize the differences of the individuals of a race than those of different races.

Therefore I hold I am not justified in looking at my fellow man and measuring him according to my own views, especially if he be of a different race. That principle I regard as the true starting point in nationalizing this country with its people principally drawn from two great races. In other words it is necessary to adopt the attitude of the man in the street, in which he gives and takes ground in passing through the crowd—the only practicable way by which the business of the street becomes possible.

Recently Sir Lomer Gouin, Premier of Quebec, made an appeal to this Province of Ontario for consideration on behalf of those speaking the French language within the Province, evidently based on the belief that the French-speaking British subject in Ontario is being unfairly treated. That evidently is the view likewise of Senator David.

Sir Lomer Gouin is the mouthpiece of the Province of Quebec and he would not have spoken if he was not expressing the views of a large number of people in his Province.

We all know that the school question in Canada has been the cause of a great deal of friction and we are all agreed that differences of race and religion are dangerous to the State and interfere with that homogeneity so absolutely essential in a young country. When my fellow man takes a certain attitude and says it is a question of conscience with him, I feel I must give grave consideration to his views.

While no public man in Ontario has come out into the open as Sir Lomer Gouin has done, still we know that there is a feeling among a considerable class in Ontario that all is not well in Quebec.

Now what are these questions that are causing friction? The leading ones might be enumerated as for instance in Ontario: Language in schools; Religion in schools; and in Quebec, the marriage question as it affects civil law. Efficiency of schools.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS.

It is questionable indeed if ten per cent of the people of both provinces really understand the true situation in so far as these questions affect the public. Any way they should not be allowed to drift. The sound policy for the country in these questions affecting conscience is that pursued by us all in the street—in not attempting to run down the other fellow. I feel that there is a vast amount of microbes mixed up in these matters and the only medicine for the microbe is to drag it into the sunlight. In other words let us get at the bottom of these questions. How? Suppose the Chief Justices of Ontario and Quebec had the authority to each nominate three fair-minded men drawn from different shades of thought in the two provinces, and have the six men act as a Committee to investigate these questions of differences—these questions that produce friction between sections of our people. We do not want a legal enquiry—we merely want facts as to what the conditions are. Give such a Committee two years to get at the facts. If they don't agree no harm is done. They can in that event at least clearly set out the two sides. I can see the possibility of suggestions emanating from such a group of men that would be a blessing to this country in opening the way towards harmonizing to some extent differences that must naturally retard that cohesion so essential to the welfare of this country. Give the public a clear statement of all the facts and the public will reach reasonably fair conclusions.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—Whom is that letter by?

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—I got the permission of the gentleman to read the letter, but he asked me not to mention his name. I have no objection to ask him to allow me to give the name. As to his method, I do not know whether his suggestion is a good one or bad one, but he certainly voices my own sentiments. On a question of this kind, no matter how strongly I may feel as to the character of schools we should have in this country, it is my duty to have regard to the opinion of others. It is my duty also to have regard to the prejudices of others; and on this subject which is disturbing the population of this country, I, as a Canadian who have nothing but good will towards all, desire that it should be settled in a fair and equitable manner, and that fair play should be extended the minority that come from the Province of Quebec to inhabit the Province of Ontario. If the reverse takes place what do you have? You have the tendency of having that nationality in the Province of Quebec instead of disseminating through the various parts of the Dominion. I say, and I say it advisedly, that nothing could be better in the interests of Canada than the dissemination of that heroic and grand people among the English inhabitants of the various parts of Canada.