

BI-LINGUAL SCHOOLS IN CANADA

“ language, and there is no reason why they should not do so.
“ To possess the knowledge of both languages is an advantage to them. And the use of the English language,
“ instead of their own, if such a change should ever take
“ place, must be brought about by the operation of the same
“ influences which are making it all over this continent the
“ language of other nationalities as tenacious of their native
“ tongue as the French. It is a change that cannot be
“ forced. To attempt to deprive a people of the use of
“ their native tongue would be as unwise as it would be
“ unjust, even if it were possible. In the British Empire
“ there are people of many languages. The use of these does
“ not affect the loyalty of the people to the Crown, and the
“ English language remains the language of the Empire.
“ The object of these schools is to make better scholars of
“ the rising generation of French children, and to enable
“ them to do better for themselves by teaching them English,
“ while leaving them free to make such use of their own
“ language as they please.”

It therefore becomes necessary to examine closely the terms of the Circular in order to ascertain the nature and extent of the restrictions it imposes. Unfortunately it is couched in obscure language, and it is not easy to ascertain its true effect. It opens with a definition of English-French schools, and it was argued on behalf of the appellants that even this definition was not within the power of the Department: but there is no weight in this objection, provided that the selected schools are so dealt with as not to impeach any legal right or privilege of the appellants. The second paragraph of the Circular is important. The regulations and courses of study prescribed for the public schools, which are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Circular, are applied to the English-French schools, with the following modifications:

“ The provision for religious instruction and exercises in
“ public schools shall not apply to separate schools, and
“ separate school boards may substitute the Canadian Catholic readers for the Ontario public school readers.”

These modifications bring the instructions into agreement with the provisions as to regulations affecting religious instruction in the Common Schools Act and the Separate Schools Act. The only reference to religious instruction to