

On the 24th June, 1890, the national congress held its first session in St. Boniface. The object of that congress was to show that the lay element felt, as well as its clergy, the injury and injustice perpetrated. The priests were the first to ask that they be dispensed from taking part in such assembly, precisely to give a denial to those who affirmed that the claims to our most sacred rights were simply on account of the clergy. Numerous delegates came from every parish: the ardor of those sincere patriots, of those convinced Catholics, offered a thrilling sight that left no place for doubt as to their unanimity and determination.

The Catholic population having given its opinions, its first pastor was happy to congratulate it, and on the 15th August he published a pastoral letter in which he expresses himself with love and confidence, indicating, however, the dangers that are to be avoided and the means to be employed.

The death of Bishop Farand forced the Archbishop of St. Boniface to go to Montreal, in the interests of the missions of Athabaska McKenzie. He arrived there on the 10th of January, 1891, and on the same day was attacked by a sickness that put his life in danger. He felt better in February, precisely at the time of the electoral campaign. This circumstance brings me face to face with certain accusations made against me; the most unreasonable is perhaps the one that throws upon me the terrible responsibility of having sacrificed the Manitoba schools, because I did not obtain the disallowance of the laws of 1890. Among those who made that accusation there are many who voted in favor of Mr. Blake's proposition. By this unanimous vote the parliament had rendered, the disallowance morally impossible, and some want me to bear the responsibility of that impossibility created by our legislators. I am forced to say that they do not know the first word of the situation or that they construe it in a strange manner. To be absolutely and candidly sincere I must add that I do not think that there is in Canada an educated man so small minded as to believe that it was possible for me to obtain the disallowance against the vote of the whole legislature. Enough for such unlawful and unjust accusations and insinuations. It is evident that many of those who speak of the disallowance of the Manitoba school laws are not the ones who desire it. It is not even necessary to be very cunning to read between the lines on this subject. Here is simply what was wanted; elections were taking place and they were warmly contested; if only Archbishop Tache helped the opposition: if, for an instance he blamed the government on account of his deceptions; if he urged disallowance *per fas et nefas*, if he excite the Catholic populations, the result would manifest itself in electoral voting boxes. So little would be needed to upset the political scale.

I could not and would not take part in such strategy, and could not be more abused, no one can make me regret having abstained from acting in a manner unworthy of my character and position.

To protect our cause I took part in the letter in which my name has the honor to be placed with that of the other members of the Canadian Hierarchy. Not only did I sign that letter, but I framed it and respectfully asked for the signatures it contains. At the beginning of this study I stated that the first school opened in the Red River settlement was opened according to the instruction given by the Bishop of Quebec, whose jurisdiction extended from ocean to ocean. That impulsion, coming from the old metropolis, was fruitful in happy results; numerous schools were opened in the plains and forests of the west. For seventy-two years the Catholic feeling was respected so much that civil authorities favorably accepted those schools and helped them. After seventy-two years of a practice so constant and useful, a hostile disposition was manifested against that order of things. I then believed that an energetic protestation coming from those whose episcopal jurisdiction, taken collectively, covered the immense Canadian territory and are the successors of Mgr. Plessis first organizer of the Red River schools, I believed, do I say that such a protest, accompanied by a humble request to the governor-general-in-council would not be out of place. There are analogies even in contrasts, and in this matter I found a very striking one. The reader probably remembers that the bishop of Quebec had obtained from Sir John Sherbrooke, governor-general of Canada, some letters of recommendation in favor of the two missionaries and of the teacher whom his lordship sent to establish missions and schools in the Red River settlement, and that in the course of this letter the king's representative said:

"I do hereby call on all his majesty's subjects not only to permit the said missionaries to pass without hindrance or molestation, but render them all good offices, assistance and protection wherever they shall find it necessary to go in the exercise of their holy calling."

Those recommendations of the representative of his majesty had been respected since 1818, when in 1890 the Greenway government inaugurated a system of "hindrance and molestation."

It then seemed to me very natural that the successors of Bishop Plessis should implore protection from the successor of Sir John Sherbrooke, and I respectfully requested them to put their signatures on the petition prepared to be presented to the governor-general-in-council.

Many distinguished prelates have filled the Episcopal See of Quebec. The one who to-day occupies it with so much distinction has increased its glory by the splendor of the Roman purple, our most