

Ontario should be different and should learn largely the English language, and we should give them very little French now. Well, ordinary some years ago more French was taught than is now taught. In my humble opinion rule 17 makes the French language practically impossible of being taught in Ontario; that is my belief.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—I do not believe that the gentlemen who framed that rule had that intention; I cannot believe it; it is such an injustice that I will not be able to believe, and I do not believe it, and I do think in all justice that that inequality should be removed. It is quite true that every child should be taught English, and French also, and those who desire it, as the French-Canadians do, should have greater freedom, and a larger measure of it, than perhaps our English people would be willing to think of. But in this country the English language should be taught, I say, as well as the French language. Now if I may be permitted I should like to read what I consider the very harmless speech lately made by the hon. Sir Lomer Gouin at Que. The idea that it was dictating in any respect, or pretending to dictate to the Province of Ontario is, in my humble opinion, and absurdity. He simply gave an expression of goodwill and made a request, nothing more and nothing less than that. It is as follows:—

At the very time when in Europe, British and French are with each other in fighting for the triumph of justice, and while, on the field of battle British and French are generously shedding their blood to put an end to oppression in Europe, and to give an assurance of peace to all future generations, why is it that their brothers in Ontario are divided as to the advisability of teaching the language of the discoverers of this country to the children of a minority—a language which is also that of a people for which the Empire is at this moment risking the fate of its fleets, of its armies, of its colonies and of its national life?

Far be it from me to think of intervening between the government and the minority of the neighbouring province, and God keep me from saying a word which might widen the division which we deplore, but I cannot forget that it was the English-Canadians of Ontario, and the French-Canadians of Quebec who together built up Confederation, the powerful Dominion of Canada.

Who will claim that if was not in the minds of the framers of our constitution to give equal rights in matters of language, of religion, of property and equal personal rights to both races as avowed by Sir John A. Macdonald in 1890, and who will claim that the British North America Act was not inspired by similar sentiments?

Thank God, we have always lived here in peace and harmony without either oppression

or oppressed, and I know the spirit of our people well enough to be able to declare there never will be. But if it should ever occur that the minority have occasion to complain of its treatment by the majority, would it astonish anybody if Ontario should raise its voice to ask for justice for those of its own race and faith?

Animated by this sentiment I desire before taking my seat to make an appeal in the name of the entire population of Quebec, of English-Canadians, Scotch and Irish, as well as of French-Canadians, to the government and to the majority of the province of Ontario. In the name of the justice and of the generosity of which Britain has given so many proofs, and which cannot fail to animate every truly British citizen, as well as in the name of the struggles which our forefathers sustained in opening to civilization the rich domains which are our common patrimony, I ask that justice be given to the French minority of Ontario, and that if necessary they be not only justly, but even generously, dealt with.

In the name of the expression it has given to human thought, I ask that the French language be taught to the school children of Ontario who wish to learn and to speak it. Let me in addition send to the minority of Ontario a message of active sympathy, for we owe it to them.

Now, that speech is complained of as being an interference with the affairs of Ontario, I claim that it is not; that it is nothing more than a message of good will. I say again that every true Canadian should cultivate in every respect good will between the various portions of the population of this country. Through discord and animosity nothing but harm can be done; by good will and united action let those who desire speak whatever language they please, and certainly let our large body of French-Canadians in this country educate their children as they please. I think that is what will best promote the very best interests and advancement of this country. To-day in Great Britain what have we got? Under the banner of Great Britain we have the Indians of India, the population of South Africa, of Australia, of New Zealand and Canada, all fighting under the one banner; fighting for what? For liberty and justice. In our smaller way in Canada let us who compose the majority give fair play to the minority in every reasonable way. Now, to show that there is liberality of opinion among our best thinkers I want to read one more letter to you if I be permitted. I may say that this letter is penned by a son of a north of Ireland Protestant, who is himself a Protestant. He is a large-minded man of broad views, and a very able thinker. As you will see by his letter he claims that these questions are not understood in Canada, that the vast majority of