

tant ones. Close our mission schools at Pointe-aux-Trembles, at Grand Ligne, and here in the city, and at the same time you close hundreds of Roman Catholic schools which are standing there simply because some people threatened the priests to send us their children. Close our mission schools and you will see the priests jubilant about the return of what they call "the good old time."

If you desire to know what is the degree of popular education in the province of Quebec you have only to compare the wretched hut of the school master with the palace of the priest. Compare the salary of hundreds of school teachers who receive from \$76 to \$80 a year, with the tithes paid to the priest and you will see what the clergy of this province think about popular education.

It is not necessary to insist on the meagre programme of those rural schools, and I shall not speak to you of their degrading discipline, of their silly methods of teaching, of the hatred inspired among the children against citizens of another race and another creed.

And let me say, that it is only after some years that intelligent children attending their schools can read fluently, and a few years after many of them have forgotten all about it. Why? Because the books and papers they are allowed to read would lead them to such an intellectual atrophy that the idea of looking for anything better and more interesting would not occur to them.

It is not surprising if we find in the country hundreds of young men who say:—"I could read at 12, but I have forgotten all about it." But such men are handy voters in the hands of the clergy who impose their will without having to fear any resistance.

It is true that there are in this Province better and higher schools, convents, and colleges, but it is only for the elected of the clergy, for the rich class, for those who shall be some day the devoted supporters of the clerical authority, who in return shall help them to make good business. And those two classes of men bound together by temporal interest shall share the spoil of the toilers of the soil.

What kind of an education has Rome given to those countries where her power has not been counterbalanced by a Protestant influence? What kind of an education has she given to Italy, to Spain, to Mexico, to Brazil, to Peru? In all those countries from 70 to 90 per cent. are unable to read.

Here in Quebec, the proportion is not the same it is true but in reality things are just as bad, because it is merely a sham primary education which is given in the Roman Catholic schools. Many children can read but that is all, there is often no instruction in that but it serves as a mask to the deepest ignorance.

After the statistics of 1890, there are no less than 30,000 children between 7 and 14 who are not going to any school in the province of Quebec.

Is it because the French Canadians do not desire to educate their children? No, the fact that they send hundreds of them to our mission schools is a proof that they are not indifferent towards education.

It is only those who know what an amount of courage and of determination it requires from them for placing their children under our care, who can see how they are longing for education. Showers of anathemas fall upon them gratuitously (it is the only free gift of Rome). The sacraments are refused to them, their parents and friends are detached from them, and they are looked upon as the scum of the land. But in spite of such a persecution we had among our scholars last winter 97 boys and girls whose parents still adhere to the Church of Rome.

A great many people in the country who cannot see the spiritual object we have in view, imagine that we work in the interest of a political society, others say that we form a society of speculators and that a large sum of money is paid to us for every soul that we are perverting. The priests point to us not only as the most dangerous enemies of their creed but also of the French nationality, and they arouse the most bitter feelings of their people when they say that we want to educate their children in order to make them Protestants, and that we make them Protestants in order to make them English. So a French-Canadian who becomes a Protestant is not only an apostate in the eyes of his neighbors, but also a coward and a traitor to his nationality.

Our faith, our language, our nationality, that is the materials of the lofty wall by which the priests have encircled this province and by which they want to shut it to all outside influence.

Their faith! Is really their religion one of faith? No, sir, it is one of fear, one of terror, one of fanaticism, one of cupidity. The most cruel ostracism is directed against anyone who dares to make an effort towards his liberty and the number of the poor victims who have been crushed by the power of their domineering clergy fills up the pages of the Canadian history and keeps silent the lions of the nation.

Our language! Have we ever made an effort in order to put an end to the French language? What is the language of our missionaries? What language is spoken in our churches? What is the language mainly taught in our schools? What is the language of our cercles? Is it not the French, the tongue of our ancestors? We study it, we teach it, and we honor those who speak it with talent. So it is a slander to accuse this Assembly of aiming at the destruction of the French language.

Our nationality! We are accused of destroying patriotic sentiments. I would easily understand such an accusation if we were Jesuits. That