

of the B. N. A. Act applied, and its application is very limited, and applies to the use of the French language in the Federal courts in these provinces. Up to 1905 it might be said that all the courts in the Territories were Federal, but under Provincial self control or autonomy the provinces establish the courts and English is the language employed in them.

Under Section 133 of the B. N. A. Act the French language could be used in the courts in the North West Territories, and on this point Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as reported on page 8577 of Hansard, June 30th, 1905, said: "It is perhaps worthy of remark that although the French language exists to-day as an official language in the North-West Territories in the courts of law, if I am correctly informed there has not been a single document in the French language entered in a court of justice there for the last fifteen years, nor a single word of French spoken in the courts. That is not to be wondered at when we remember that to-day the population of French origin in the North-West Territories is almost infinitely small, not more than 4 per cent. If the French people in the Territories were in the same position to-day as they were in 1877; if there were as many who speak the French language as there are who speak the English language, then I could understand my hon. friend arguing from the point of view of utility and sentiment. But, if it be true that according to the last census there were altogether 200,000 people in the North-West Territories, and only 8,000 of them who spoke the French language, then I say it cannot be argued in the name of justice that they have the right to the official use of that language. For my part, proud as I am of my French origin, I could not claim in the name of justice and fair-play that right, in view of the fact that there is such a small proportion of French-speaking people in those Territories."

What Confederation Imposed.

On pages 8580 and 8581 (Hansard, 1905), Sir Wilfrid Laurier continuing said:

"The fathers of confederation did not pretend to authorize the French language in any part of the Dominion except in this parliament and in the province of Quebec. Everywhere else the people were left free to deal with the matter as they thought fit. Not so with regard to the schools. As to them the minority were given special protection by the Acts I have quoted. The legislature of that day, composed of men whom we still delight to call the fathers of confederation, put into the constitution principles and regulations for the protection of the minority in its religion, but not in its language. Sir, I have to say this only to my fellow-countrymen. I know very well what will be said to-morrow in the province of Quebec. I anticipate the language which I shall hear in a few days—that I have gone back upon my race. I have heard that before, and I am prepared to hear it again.

"I have done the best I could in order to give to the minority in those Territories the rights to which they are entitled under the constitution, and my first words to my fellow countrymen in Quebec will be, if they continue in me that confidence which my hon. friend said to-day they had in me, I will tell them that upon this occasion, as on all occasions I have stood for their protection in the rights given to them by the constitution. But, Sir, I find nothing in the constitution for the protection of the rights of the French language. It is a right which they must exercise like everybody else and if they become strong they shall be respected and they shall have their language respected, but not if they are a minority, as they are to-day, for I understand there are only two members of the French race in the legislature of the Territories out of twenty-five, not a word of French in