

The population of Canada is over one third Catholic. The government is eight tenths non-Catholic. Non-Catholics have not a large numerical majority, and still, now massively and overwhelmingly non-Catholic is the Press, public opinion, and the atmosphere of the Dominion! In this fair province of ours, Catholics form twenty per cent of the population, and we have not a single member of Parliament at Ottawa, and only two or three in the Provincial House at Regina. We have only one Catholic judge. We have hardly twenty Catholic lawyers out of four hundred, only one Catholic professor out of thirty on the regular teaching staff at the provincial University. We have only four Catholic school inspectors out of forty-two, and no Catholic teacher on our provincial Normal School staffs.

Why are Catholics so strong numerically and so weak and insignificant in influence in this province? Why, if not chiefly on account of our neglect of higher education? Catholics have been satisfied to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Catholics in this province have tilled the soil and built the railways, but to a great extent they have neglected higher education.

During the last few years, there has been a marked improvement in this respect but, unfortunately, little has been done for the Catholic education of the boys. Several convents have been opened in different parts of the province, some of which are doing secondary school work. Only two preparatory schools for boys are now being established in the southern part of the province, whilst nothing as yet has been done in this diocese. Nothing has even yet been done to make up for the lack of religious and moral training of the Catholic boys frequenting the provincial institutions of learning.

If we want the Church to wield influence in this country, if we want her to exercise her educative force, if we want her to fulfill her mission in society, we need men with intellectual power and genius for leadership. We need big minds to master big problems, to give inspiration and direction to their fellow-men; and the means to power, the means to influence, and the means to leadership is higher education.

To foster this higher education for our Catholic youth, two plans suggest themselves. One is to make use of and co-operate with the already existing state institutions of learning; the other, to establish an independent Catholic College somewhere in the diocese.

While the latter is the ideal plan from a Catholic standpoint, there are several obstacles militating against it, which seem to render it unfeasible. First, the founding of an efficient independent Catholic College which could compete with the state institutions would require a much larger amount of money than the Catholics can raise.