

52 Spadina Ave.,
Toronto, December 28, 1896.

My dear Mr. Solicitor,—

Yours of the 24th from Quebec was received, and I now write, in strict confidence, regarding a matter which much concerns yourself, as well as the Government.

The Bishop of Quebec has written the Archbishop, asking the hierarchy of this Province to give a united expression of opinion in opposition to the settlement of the school question, effected by Mr. Laurier.

We had a conference on Saturday night and discussed the subject in its every phase, and I am confident the Archbishop is convinced that absolute non-interference is the proper attitude for the bishops here to assume.

For fear His Grace of Kingston (who, you know, is somewhat impulsive) might, on receipt of Bishop Begin's letter, reply thereto before knowing the views of his brethren in the episcopate, he was at once communicated with by Archbishop Walsh, and a conference of the bishops has been arranged for this week here. Until that is concluded, we shall not know what the consensus is.

I am putting my views on paper for the Archbishop, and expressed my opinion unequivocally, both verbally and in writing, and have impressed upon him the advisability of endeavouring to put an end to the agitation which the school question has engendered, and from which the Catholics in Ontario have been the greatest sufferers. I also drew attention to the changed attitude of the Conservative press since the Cornwall election, as they now emphatically declare to the supporters of that party that the settlement has been accepted by Ontario as conclusive. I likewise ventured to express the opinion that no Conservative, seeking to represent an English-speaking constituency, would now think of reopening the question, because political capital can no longer be made out of it. And also that the object of the present move of Monsieur Begin is, therefore, to induce the bishops here to express an opinion which will help one of the parties in Quebec at the coming local election.

These considerations I pressed upon His Grace as strenuously as one could, who was merely asked for an opinion. He is very sagacious, and, I think, sees it will not be in the interest of the Catholics of Ontario that the agitation should longer continue.