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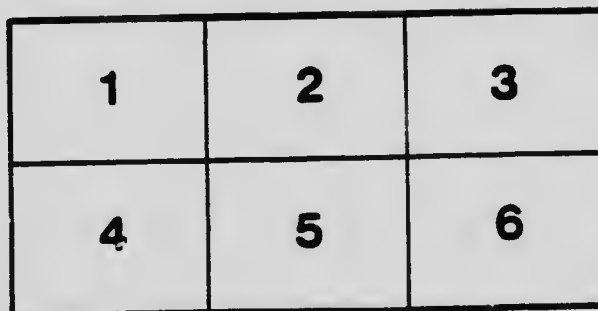
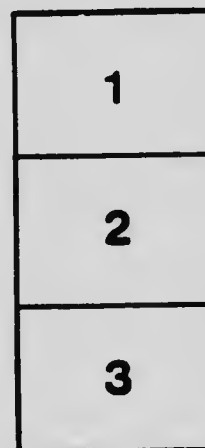
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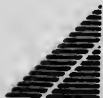
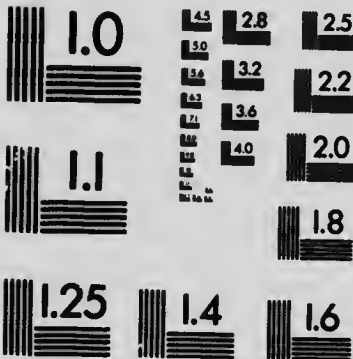
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CANADA

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

SPEECH

OF

P. E. LAMARCHE, ESQ.,

MEMBER FOR NICOLET

ON

THE BILINGUAL QUESTION

In the House of Commons, Ottawa, on Thursday, May 11, 1916.

On the motion of Sir Robert Borden for Committee of Supply:

Mr. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Kamouraska) moved in amendment:

That all the words after "that" in the main motion be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"It has long been the settled policy of Great Britain whenever a country passed under the sovereignty of the Crown by treaty or otherwise, to respect the religion, usages and language of the inhabitants who thus become British subjects;

"That His Majesty's subjects of French origin in the province of Ontario complain that by recent legislation they have been to a large extent deprived of the privilege which they and their fathers have always enjoyed since Canada passed under the sovereignty of the British Crown, of having their children taught in French;

"That this House, especially at this time of universal sacrifice and anxiety, when all energies should be concentrated on the winning of the war, would, while fully recognizing the principle of provincial rights and the necessity of every child being given a thorough English education, respectfully suggest to the Legislative Assembly the wisdom of making it clear that the privilege of the children of French parentage of being taught in their mother tongue be not interfered with."

Mr. P. E. LAMARCHE (Nicolet): Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to take up much of the time of this House in dealing with the resolution which has been so well

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and ably discussed by its mover and by hon. members on both sides of the House who have taken part in the debate. I feel that it is my duty, however, to state here, as fully as I can, the reasons why I give to this resolution my unqualified support.

The speaker who has just taken his seat, my hon. friend from Frontenac (Mr. Edwards), opened his speech by saying that under the circumstances it would be very hard for him to be moderate, and he has, I think, given a fair illustration of the truth of his prophecy. Not only will I try to be moderate, but I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I will be moderate. Surely my hon. friend from Frontenac will be astonished at the fact that we French Canadians have spoken in this debate moderately, because it is well recognized that in this squabble we are the under dog. Mr. Speaker, I have not devoted any part of my time to studying the different censuses, or to trying to assort the ignorance of this country into races, counties, and denominations, and that is the reason why I am not able at present to follow the figures given by my hon. friend from Frontenac. I remember, however—and I am sorry that I have not the documents in my hand—that when the statements just made before the House were published, not very



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long ago, the figures were repudiated by the proper department of the Quebec Legislature. I believe that some of the newspapers of this country will again repudiate the figures, since they have assumed more importance by being brought before this House. If I am unable to follow him in the statements he has made as to the proportions of ignorance or illiteracy, I believe that every one who has listened to the debate which has taken place on this resolution will admit that there are in this House to-day representatives of the French Canadian race who surely know how to read and write and talk, either in French or in English. Although I have differed on many questions from the right hon. leader of the Opposition, I was proud yesterday that one of my race could master the English language so well as to excite the admiration of both French and English in this country. Taking for granted, for the purposes of discussion, that the figures brought before the House by the hon. member for Frontenac are correct, what do they show? They do not show that the French Canadian people are not able to learn any subject of study as well as the English-speaking people. They do not prove that the French Canadian student cannot follow the courses in any school as well as his English competitor. They perhaps show that the results were due to non-attendance in the schools; and, if that is the case, the proper remedy is not to blot out French altogether from the schools, but to make necessary laws for compulsory education, and force every child in the province of Ontario to attend school; and the same thing might be suggested to the legislation of the province of Quebec.

My hon. friend from Frontenac was scandalized because such a question as this has been brought before this House because, he says, it is so remote from federal politics. He said it had been brought here only to serve the purposes of the political followers of certain leaders. I remember that only a few years ago certain questions were brought into the federal arena for discussion not only in this House but also before public opinion in this country. Certain questions were brought up, and I am told that to those questions many members on this side of the House, at least, owe their seats. Were those questions foreign to federal politics, or were they solely within the province of the local legislature? We all remember the famous question of the *Ne Temere* decree. We all

remember the turmoil which was raised in certain parts of the Dominion on account of the presence of the right hon. leader of the Opposition at the Eucharistic Congress. We all remember that, Mr. Speaker; and can it be said to-day that those questions were not more foreign to the federal arena than the question of education?

The question of education is a question which is dealt with separately in the British North America Act. There are three sections dealing with legislative powers: One section, 91, which enumerates the different subjects upon which this Parliament has power to legislate; the second, section 92, which enumerates the different subjects over which the provincial legislatures are supreme, so far as legislative powers are concerned; and there is a special section, section 93, devoted to education. In that section it is provided that provincial legislatures are supreme, so far as education is concerned—supreme in the sense that the Federal Parliament cannot legislate except in an exceptional case; the case of a remedial Bill. But they can legislate only within certain limits. The subject is limited by a special proviso dealing with certain guarantees given to denominational creeds in this country. It is true that this guarantee contemplates religion. But I maintain that the French-Canadian Catholics have in that section certain rights as well as their English-speaking co-citizens of the Catholic creed.

If we go beyond the limit of education, if we go back beyond that, we find that education in Upper Canada governed by the law of 1863, and the law of 1863 enabled the Catholics of this province to have their school matters regulated absolutely by a board of commissioners and by their own inspectors. The board of commissioners and inspectors were empowered to determine the kind of schools to be established and how those schools might be governed. They had the power also to say whether the schools would be totally English or totally French, or whether they would be French and English, that is, bilingual. That right existed before Confederation, and by section 93 of the British North America Act all these rights have been preserved. Therefore, I say that the legislation passed by the province of Ontario is not only unjust, not only oppressive, but is also ultra vires.

But it is not my intention to deal with that matter. The general terms in which this resolution has been worded allows,

in my opinion, no serious objection to be taken as to the advisability of bringing it before the House. Its conclusion, if adopted, cannot be considered as binding in any way on the Legislature of Ontario. The subject-matter of the resolution is treated as a question of general policy in the light of British principles, which we all know, and which we all try to apply in this country as well as everywhere else. Furthermore, this resolution does not deal in any way with the constitutional or judicial aspects of the question. This enables me to say that even if all the contentions of our English-speaking friends in Ontario were maintained by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England, this motion would still be in order, because it is the duty of this Parliament to discuss all matters which are connected with the good government and welfare of this country at large and with the welfare of any portion of it, because this Parliament is the national forum where, naturally, according to British principles, these questions must be aired.

I am a lawyer by profession, and I have learned the principles of law in the office of a gentleman who occupies a seat on the treasury benches; I mean the hon. the Postmaster General (Mr. Casgrain). I have not been able to follow him always in politics, but I have always thought that he was a very good lawyer, and I still think so. In order to illustrate that I am sincere, I am going to invoke his high authority on the very question that is before the House to-day. I would have preferred that the Postmaster General himself should have done it. He has very cleverly outlined the course which parliamentary procedure should take by attempting to show that this question should not come before this House, but in this case, Mr. Speaker, I must abide by the decision given by yourself yesterday, when you explained at length the doctrine applicable to such a case as this. I am at liberty to do so, especially as the Postmaster General has upheld your decision by his own vote. It having been settled by yourself, Mr. Speaker, and your position having practically been endorsed by the Postmaster General, that this is the proper place to discuss this question, and the Postmaster General having thought to put aside the question and not to deal with it upon its merits, it is my duty to the country at large to show what his position with regard to it is, lest some people might unjustly

represent that the Postmaster General does not think the same way as we do upon it. I do not want him to suffer any harm from that.

I will quote the opinion of the Postmaster General on the question of schools in Ontario given to the New York Times Magazine of February 13, 1915. I will give an extract from a legal opinion written by him, because I say that the Postmaster General passes not only in Montreal, but all over Canada as a high authority on these questions:

In Ontario, where there are 250,000 French Canadians, the difficulty is with the act of the provincial Legislature in hindering the teaching of French in some of the schools and actually prohibiting it in others.

I commend these words to the hon. member for Frontenac and the hon. member for Kingston:

Until 1912 the schools in the French sections of Ontario were bilingual, as much attention being paid to French as to English. But in that year it was enacted that thereafter in all schools then established French should be used exclusively only for French children during the first two years of their schooling and that beyond that age the language in all forms should be English except for one hour a day.

Now, since 1912, many new French Canadian settlements have been established in the province of Ontario, and of course they have their schools, but the provincial authorities have ruled that by the wording of an Act of 1912 no French whatever can be taught in the schools opened after that law went into effect.

When France ceded Canada to Great Britain it was stipulated in the treaty between the two mother countries that the French in Canada should retain all their civil, religious, and social rights. And, furthermore, the British North America Act, which is, in part, the Constitution of Canada, recognizes French as one of the two official languages of the country. So Ontario is violating both constitution and treaty. Two cases growing out of this very serious school disturbance, with its incidental strikes of teachers and pupils and protests of parents, are now pending in the courts and will be taken to the Privy Council of England for settlement. I believe that the final ruling will be in favour of the French Canadians, for the Privy Council has never failed to uphold our rights.

I agree entirely with the Postmaster General in the opinion he gave as a lawyer outside of this House, but I cannot agree with him in the opinion he gives as a politician sitting on the treasury benches.

Mr. CASGRAIN: What my hon. friend read from was an alleged interview with me in the New York Times, and it was not at all a legal opinion that I gave at that time. I may tell my hon. friend and this House that what I said was not correctly reported in the New York Times, although

a good deal of what appeared in that interview I did say.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Perhaps the minister would state in what respect the interview was incorrect?

Mr. CASGRAIN: I certainly will. I gave the reporter of the New York Times the contentions of the French Canadians in Ontario, on the constitutional rights in the matter of the French language, and not my own contentions on the question.

Mr. LAMARCHE: According to the Rules of the House I have to accept the explanation given by the minister, and I can only regret that he has waited so long to give it. He has allowed this country and his compatriots to be guided by what I still consider the good legal opinion circulated by the New York Times. My hon. friend says he was misquoted. This interview seems to have been well prepared; it is even accompanied by a very good picture of the hon. gentleman. Unless he thinks that the photograph is not as good as the original, I am sure he will not deny that part of the interview.

As a consequence of the enactment of Regulation 17 a great deal of discussion has taken place in this country, and I recently a petition was sent to the Executive of Parliament asking the Governor General in Council to grant disallowance of a statute which elevated to the dignity of the law Regulation 17. I have not studied very carefully the report laid on the Table by the hon. Minister of Justice; but from what I can gather at a first perusal, some of his conclusions seem to me extraordinary. A great part of the report is taken up with allegations and arguments to the effect that this Government can not grant disallowance of a regulation, but only of a statute. We knew that; the people of Canada knew that; the 500,000 petitioners knew it; and the best evidence of what I say is that they never asked for it. What they asked was that the statute elevating Regulation 17 to the dignity of a law be disallowed. I agree with the right hon. leader of the Opposition that in every case disallowance is ineffective in practice, inasmuch as the Government which has passed the law complained of can the very next day pass a similar one; nevertheless, I wish to go on record that had I been a minister of the Crown I should have voted for disallowance. The reasons given by the Minister of Justice for not granting disal-

lowance can be put under two heads: first, a law can hardly be disallowed that is within the legislative power of a province, and this law is alleged and seems to be within the rights of the province of Ontario, dealing as it does with education; secondly, if this law is ultra vires, the proper remedy is not to seek disallowance, but to apply to the courts. As a consequence, a law being either intra vires or ultra vires, the fathers of Confederation have put this provision in the Act for no purpose. I do not believe that that explanation will be accepted in toto by the population of Canada, or at least by the numerous petitioners who have petitioned the Government. However, I do not wish to deal with this point any longer. The question is between the Executive and the petitioners, and they will probably have an opportunity of settling it one day or the other.

I was very pleased yesterday at the clever and admirable speech of the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Nickle). He and I do not always see eye to eye, particularly in this case. But I have the greatest respect for him, and for two reasons: first, because in this Parliament he always discusses any kind of question in a very moderate tone and on a very high plane; secondly, because I know—and I am sure in this case as well as in many others—that the basis of his opinions are his personal convictions, and not mere petty questions of politics. On several occasions, and particularly on one occasion, he has shown that when he had to choose between following his leader and following his personal convictions, he has followed his personal convictions, and I have great admiration for a man who will do that. That is why, in dealing with Regulation 17, I will take into serious consideration the arguments set forth by my hon. friend from Kingston, and I will try as well as I can to prove that his contentions are not quite correct, but that the contention of the hon. member for Kamouraska, of the right hon. leader of the Opposition, and of those who supported them on this question, is the correct one. My hon. friend from Kingston has a different explanation from ours of the word "hitherto." I will not delve into dictionaries; I will not consult eminent authorities; I will not even quote the opinions of able lawyers in case such opinions may be contradicted later on; but I will give to this regulation the practical interpretation which is given to it by the De-

partment of Education of Ontario. Although the interpretation of my hon. friend from Kingston is very generous, and although the interpretation sometimes given by Mr. Ferguson seems to be very generous, when we look only at the interpretation, yet, if any of my compatriots dare to follow those interpretations, they find that next day they are brought before a court of law, fined, and threatened with imprisonment. I believe this inclines them to take the other interpretation and to endeavour to live in peace at any cost.

In the city of Windsor, in the province of Ontario, a school was established long before the enactment of Regulation 17. Later on, after 1912, after the passing of that regulation, two new schools were established. According to our interpretation of the word "hitherto," the school established previous to the enactment of the regulation had a right to be classed as an English-French school and to have French taught to the pupils in it; but the new schools established after the passing of the regulation could not be granted the same privilege. I will read a copy of the resolution which was passed by the Roman Catholic School Board of the city of Windsor and which was sent to the principal of the St. Edmond and St. Francis schools:

Moved by A. Langlois, seconded by R. Langlois:

That a Sister be engaged to teach the French language exclusively in St. Edmond and St. Francis schools, the said teacher to be a French-Canadian and to hold a first class teaching certificate and capable of teaching the French language in all its branches. That she is to teach the said language one hour in each class except the entrance class each day at St. Edmond and half an hour each day in all classes at St. Francis school. Salary at \$350 per annum to commence at date of service.

Carried unanimously.

Windsor, June 1, 1914.

The following is the answer received by the secretary-treasurer of the Separate School Board of Windsor from Mr. Colquhoun, Deputy Minister of Education of Ontario:

Toronto, August 5, 1914.

Sir:

I am directed by the Minister of Education to say that he understands that your Board proposes to introduce the teaching of French into the St. Edmond and St. Francis Separate

Schools. The minister desires me to inquire whether this report is correct.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Sgd.) A. H. U. Colquhoun,
Deputy Minister of Education.

D. Gourd, Esq.,
Secretary-Treasurer, Separate School Board,
Windsor, Ontario.

Now the answer sent to the Deputy Minister of Education:

Windsor, Ont.,
August 3, 1914.

To the Deputy Minister of Education,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of August 5th received, and contents noted. In reply would beg to say that we intend to introduce French in the St. Edmond and St. Francis schools, and you will find a copy of a resolution passed at a meeting held on June 1, 1914.

In your letter you ask me a question which I am answering you and I am asking you a question which I would like answered. From what source did you get this information?

Awaiting your reply on same by return mail, I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,
(Sgd.) D. Gourd.

Sec.-Treas. R.C. S.S. Board, of the city
of Windsor.

Follows a letter dated October 31, 1914, sent by the Deputy Minister of Education:

Toronto, October 31, 1914.

Sir:

I am directed by the Minister of Education to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of August 8th, and to say in reply that the subject has been under his careful consideration, and that he finds that the Regulations of the Department of Education do not allow French to be taught as a subject of study in any of the Separate Schools in the city of Windsor, with the exception of the school of the Sacred Heart.—

That was the school that was established before the regulation was passed.

—You will accordingly, within a reasonable time, make such changes in the regulations of your school as may be found necessary under this instruction.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Sgd.) A. H. U. Colquhoun,
Deputy Minister of Education.

My hon. friend the member for Kingston will probably think that one school was within one section and that the two others were within another section, and that according to his interpretation of the regulation as given yesterday, one would have been regulated by Regulation 15 and the two others by Regulation 17; but that is not the case, because the city of Windsor,

where the three schools have been established, forms only one section, and these schools are within the limits of the same section. Therefore this is a practical application of the word "hitherto." The first school continues to have French taught in it, because, according to our interpretation and the interpretation of the Minister of Education of Ontario, it was established before 1912, and the two others, although within the same section and supported by the same ratepayers, are refused the same privilege, only because, according to this interpretation which, I believe, is the right one, they have been established after the passing of the regulation. This example shows that the interpretation given before this House by my hon. friend—was given probably to calm the demands of the French Canadians, but is not in accord with the facts.

Now, a rapid review of that Regulation 17 will reveal the fact that it changes altogether the system of education and is detrimental to our interests; and, as I have already said, this is the proper place to discuss this matter. Some of my English-speaking friends on this side of the House have asked me: "What interest do you have to bring this question before the House? Do you think it will settle the question?" My answer is very simple. We are so convinced that this measure is unjust, oppressive and illegal on the face of it, that it is to our interest to show it to the country at large; and those who passed that regulation are apparently so convinced of the same thing that they are interested in not letting the public at large know it; and the reason why we bring this subject before this House is to inform the public of this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific—moreover, the world at large, if the world at large take an interest in this local matter—that of all the possessions of the British Empire the province of Ontario is the place where the language of the conquered is the least respected. When this thing is known in the country, when it is known that French, the language of the pioneers of Canada, the language of those who founded this country, who won it from the wilds, and who have preserved it not only for themselves, but for Canadians in the wide sense of the word—when it is known that this language has not the same rights and privileges in this country as Welsh has in Wales, as French has in Mauritius, as the Dutch language has in South Africa, notwithstanding the bloody war that took

place there fourteen years ago, perhaps public opinion will have something to say about it, and perhaps men will be able to get together from the four corners of this country and ask that justice be rendered to whom justice is due.

Regulation 17 begins as follows:

English-French Public and Separate Schools.
Circular of Instruction.

There are only two classes of primary schools in Ontario—public schools and separate schools; but, for convenience of reference, the term English-French is applied to those schools of each class annually designated by the minister for inspection as provided in 5 below and in which French is a language of instruction and communication as limited in 3 (1) below.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the only English-French schools are those designated for us by the Minister of Education, and even these are limited by clauses to which I will now refer. The French language, by Regulation 17, is treated from two different points of view: First, as the language of instruction and communication; that is, the language to be used in teaching geography, arithmetic, catechism, or any other matter; and secondly, as a subject of study. The French language as the language of communication between the pupil and the teacher is absolutely abolished, except as regards the child who is beginning his schooling, and who is absolutely unable to understand anything but the language of his mother, the French language. As soon as this child has been able to gather the principle of the English language, he ceases to benefit from the privilege of having his tuition given in his mother tongue. This is the "generous" part of Regulation 17, as it affects my compatriots of Ontario. As a subject of study, this regulation deals with the French language differently. It puts French on the same footing as geography, arithmetic, or any other subject of study in the class. But where this is so permitted, the time assigned to it is one hour. But the inspector can, without giving any reason, and whenever he chooses, reduce that hour to three minutes or to one minute.

This "privilege," as it is called, is limited in another respect. Article 4 of this regulation provides:

In schools where French has hitherto been a subject of study, the public or the separate school board, as the case may be, may provide, under the following conditions, for instruction in French, reading, grammar, and composition in Form I to IV. (See also provision for form V, public school regulation 14 (5) addition to the subjects prescribed for the public or separate schools.

I have already given the interpretation, which I think is the right interpretation, to this clause, an interpretation sustained by the practical interpretation given by Mr. Colquhoun in the Windsor case. And in the face of these things I can only conclude, and I state without fear of contradiction, that the privilege of having French taught as the subject of study can exist only in the schools where French was taught before the regulation was passed. My hon. friend from Frontenac has cited Regulation 15. That regulation provides for the teaching of German and French. But my contention is that, since the passing of Regulation 17, although the other regulation remains on the statute-book, one part of it at least has become inoperative, that part dealing with the French language. The only part of Regulation 15 which is still in force is the part which deals with German. We are to-day confronted with this state of things. Around Verdun, in France, on the one side people talking the German language are directing shells and gas against another people whose language is French. And to-day in this country, or at least in Ontario, we find privileges given to the language of the Huns which are refused to the language of those who are defending the altars of civilization.

I believe that no matter how you twist this regulation, no matter how cleverly you put it, you can come to only one conclusion, that its object is the gradual proscription of the French language in the province of Ontario. The hon. member for Frontenac calls it a concession, and says that the French Canadians never had as many privileges as those contained in Regulation 15. On the other hand, it is pointed out that there are people in Ontario who think that too much is given to the French Canadians by this regulation. Then the matter can be easily settled. If, on the one hand, it is thought that the French Canadians get too much; if, on the other hand, the French Canadians do not like this regulation, do not care for this present from the Greeks, the matter can be easily settled by abolishing the regulation altogether, and then both sides—call them extremists if you like—will be satisfied. If you refuse to do that it is because you do not believe that you have given to the French a concession. The hon. member for Frontenac has a very peculiar way of dealing with a problem of this kind. On the one hand he says: "This state of things was arrived at after proper resolutions had

been passed in the Legislature of Ontario, and nobody made any complaint, even the representatives of your race did not make any complaint; therefore, you have no right to come and say that this regulation is oppressive or abusive." On the other hand, after dealing with the matter from other aspects, he comes back to the same subject, and, notwithstanding his former statements, says: "Why are you condemning this? You do not know its effect; you have not tried it out." If we try it out it will come. If the hon. member for Frontenac claims that we have accepted a state of things by reason of silence, if we try it out somebody will come and say: "Not only have you accepted it, silently, by not raising a voice against it, but you have accepted it practically, because you have used it."

I was very glad to hear the Prime Minister yesterday say that if ever there was a motion proposing interference by the Federal Government in the provincial politics of the province of Quebec, he would be the first to raise his voice in protest against it. I believe, however, that he will never be put to that test, because in the province of Quebec the minority, which is English-speaking, is our star witness in this case. That minority is in a position to teach the people of Canada at large that the French Canadian majority knows something about justice, about tolerance, and about equity.

It has been insinuated, even affirmed, that the French Canadian population contain a greater proportion of illiterates than any other race in Canada. I have always thought that, if we know how to apply justice, if we know how to deal with questions of that kind in such a way as to deserve the compliment of being the province which has understood better than any other the spirit of the Canadian Confederation, possibly it was because many of our men had given some time to the study of the treaties and to the study of our constitution and of such books as would instruct them in the science of justice. But even if we have to admit that there are among us so great a number of illiterates, compliment my race all the more, because then it has not acquired that science of justice by tuition or by education, but has possessed it naturally from birth.

The best test to apply to this regulation is to transpose it. I would recommend every member from Ontario who does not share my views to take a copy of this regul-

ation to-night and to make just a few amendments in it. First, instead of Ontario legislation, make it Quebec legislation, and instead of the word "French" insert the word "English," and read it. If you are satisfied after perusing only once the regulation so amended—, I will be very much surprised.

Mr. BRODER: Have you any bilingual schools in Quebec?

Mr. LAMARCHE: Yes, sir. We have bilingual schools; we have bilingual statesmen; we have bilingual homes; and we have bilingual justice. Is the abolition of the French language useful, necessary, or desirable in any way in the interest of the welfare of this Dominion? For there must be a reason for gradually abolishing the French language, as is proposed. This reason I will try to find. Is it the French language that is objectionable? I do not believe so. The time would not be well chosen to object to such a language as the French language. At present the whole world is taking its hat off to the French nation. The French language is adaptable, I believe, to the study of literature, of science, of art, of any other subject of study. The French language is spoken the world over. It is spoken in the highest courts of the world. It is recognized as an accomplishment for an educated man to be able to talk French. It is spoken by the King of England; it is spoken in the palace of the King of England; it is spoken at Rideau Hall. We do not need to be ashamed of the French language, Mr. Speaker. At present we are engaged in a great struggle, a war between Germany and her Allies on one side, all speaking different languages, and, on the other side, five or six other nations speaking other languages. I hope that the treaty of peace will be signed shortly. I hope it will be signed in the city of Berlin. But I can assure you that, no matter where it is signed, it is going to be drafted in the French language; and, no matter what adjustments appear in that treaty, those who will have to give something or those who will have to receive something, in either money, property or liberties, will find it, if they know French, in the French language of the treaty. If they do not know French, they will have to wait a few hours until somebody else translates it into some other language. If it is not the French language which is objectionable, is it because in this country French is a

political obstacle?—and in using the word "political" I use it in the large sense of the word, that is, so far as the relations of this country to other countries are concerned. I do not believe so, and I do not need to delay very long in dealing with this aspect of the question. One has only to read the history of British rule in Canada. The French Canadians have always been loyal. They have always been ready to repel the invader. They have always been ready to refuse offers from wealthy neighbours, even when some others were ready to accept them. Mr. Speaker, the children who are asking the Government of Ontario to-day to let them speak their mother tongue, and to let them be educated in their mother tongue, are the sons of a great nation. Without their ancestors—and I state this without fear of contradiction—without their ancestors of French origin, instead of paying our taxes into the Canadian treasury, you and I would be paying taxes into the treasury at Washington.

Mr. HUGH CLARK: Would you have had bilingual schools then?

Mr. LAMARCHE: I can answer the question of my hon. friend. I do not know the laws of the United States, but I have been in certain parts of that country and I know that there they give privileges to the French schools which are denied to-day by the province of Ontario, and that notwithstanding the fact that the French were not the founders of the United States. The authority for the statement I make is not commonly known. The statement came from the lips, or rather from the pen of Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of Canada for many years. He stated that without the French Canadians it would have been utterly impossible to keep this Dominion under the British Crown. Those who have read history know that. It has been written not only in French books, but in all Canadian histories worthy of the name. We pride ourselves upon it. We do not like to brag about it too often; but under circumstances like these I believe it is not only our right but our bounden duty to do so.

Is it to perfect the system of education that the regulation was passed? I always thought that the possession of two languages was an achievement compared with the possession of only one, and until it is proven that to learn French is an absolute obstacle to the acquisition of a knowledge of English I will maintain that the striking

out of one of the two languages, instead of perfecting the system of education, is handicapping it. I will go further. It is a well known principle of pedagogy that in order to get the best results in a school it is not sufficient to pour instruction into the mind of a pupil. Some other things must be done. The teacher must first ascertain the adaptability of that child to receive instruction, and the adaptability of the child to receive instruction is always found in following the law of nature, in following racial inclinations. That principle has been laid down by men of experience and of world-wide fame. It is interesting to read a page from the works of perhaps one of the greatest philosophers of the world, and surely one of the greatest philosophers of the English nation—Herbert Spencer. I do not think that Herbert Spencer could be prejudiced by this school question. He was dead long before this by-law was passed. Here is what he says:

The education of the child must accord both in mode and arrangement with the education of mankind as considered historically; or in other words, the genesis of knowledge in the individual must follow the same course as the genesis of knowledge in the race. In support of this doctrine two reasons may be assigned, either of them sufficient to establish it. One is deducible from the law of hereditary transmission as considered in its wider consequences. For if it be true that men exhibit likeness to ancestry both in aspect and character,—if, passing from individual cases in which the traits of many dead ancestors mixing with those of a few living ones greatly obscure the law, we turn to national types, and remark how the contrasts between them are persistent from age to age—if we remember that these respective types came from a common stock, and that hence the present marked differences between them must have arisen from the action of modifying circumstances upon successive generations who severally transmitted the accumulated effects to their descendants—if we find the differences to be now organic, so that the French child grows into a French man even when brought up among strangers—and if the general fact thus illustrated is true of the whole nature, Intellect inclusive; then it follows that if there be an order in which the human race has mastered its various kinds of knowledge, there will arise in every child an aptitude to acquire these kinds of knowledge in the same order. So that even were the order intrinsically indifferent, it would facilitate education to lead the individual mind through the steps traversed by the general mind. But the order is not intrinsically indifferent; and hence the fundamental reason why education should be a repetition of civilisation in little. It is alike provable that the historical sequence was, in its main outlines, a necessary one; and that the causes which determined it apply to the child as to the race.

At six o'clock House took recess.

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. LAMARCHE: Mr. Speaker, when the House rose at six o'clock, I was trying to demonstrate that any attempt to abolish the French language, gradually or otherwise, could not be justified on the ground that the language itself is objectionable; furthermore, that its abolition could not be urged because it is a political obstacle in this country, and also that such a policy could not be invoked in the interest of making the system of education more perfect. Is assimilation in the interest of harmony in any country in the world and, in particular, in this country? International law has no fixed code but we find its principles in the different authors, in the reports of different conferences, and in the meetings of great men from different nations who from time to time gather around the same table and discuss dispassionately the causes of international trouble and also the means of preventing it. The last movement in that respect emanates from The Hague and it was inaugurated not before but since the war began. I have received, in my capacity of secretary of the Canadian branch of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, several documents of great importance. The last that I have received is a document entitled:

Durable Peace—Official Commentaries on the Minimum Programme.

I believe some explanations are necessary to indicate to this House what the purpose of this association is. Since the beginning of the war, many peace articles have appeared in the press and in the Parliaments of belligerent nations, as well as in those of neutral nations, talks about peace have been heard. We have also read reports of discussions as to what should be the treaty of peace at the end of this war. The members of this Association are representative of most of the civilized nations of the earth. I will tell you what nationalities are represented officially or otherwise, on the International Board of this Association. There are the United States of America, Germany, Russia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Roumania, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela. I am translating because this document is written in French, that being the diplomatic language of the world. These people got together and worked out what is called the "Programme Minimum" containing five different propositions. These people

maintain that if the treaty of peace which is to be signed at the end of this war is to provide for a durable peace and not a temporary one, no matter what the different clauses are, at least these five conditions have to be embodied in it. What is the first article? I will translate:

The states shall guarantee the nationalities comprised within the limits of their territory civil equality, religious liberty and the free usage of their language.

And the free usage of their language. In the minds of these great men, of these unprejudiced patriots of different countries, the free usage of their language is to be a source of peace, harmony and happiness amongst the nations and amongst the different nationalities composing those nations. They also believe that the absence of these guarantees, or the non-respect of these guarantees, would be a source of trouble, discord and war. Are we in this country to be deaf to such appeals? I was glad this afternoon to hear one of the speakers who preceded me quote certain extracts showing that England and France had made proposals for the adoption of both the English and French languages in both countries as soon as possible. That idea is only in harmony with the wishes of this conference which is representative of all nationalities and all civilized countries. If that is true of any national minority in any country, I believe that here in this country we have more than one reason to adopt this principle of international law as developed in later years. We have other reasons because here it would be in the interest of peace and harmony, not only would it prevent discord and trouble and ill-feeling, but it would be the best way for the English majority to show that they not only ruled the country but that they appreciated what was in it. It would also enable the English majority to be in harmony with all English majorities throughout the whole Empire. After listening to this argument, moderately presented to this House and submitted to the public opinion of this country, I believe that the province of Ontario should hesitate before deciding to continue to be the exception in the British Empire and that it will readily abide by this principle of international law, of natural law, of British fair play, and will do its bit towards harmony in this country just as in the province of Quebec we have always done our bit to promote harmony amongst the people of our Dominion.

If I have touched upon all these sub-

jects, if I have brought forward all these reasons, I do not wish to have anybody believe that we French Canadians in this country think that this Regulation 17 is the last stroke at our language in this country, that our language will perish and that our national identity will disappear. I am confident that the French language is in this country to stay forever. Why? No matter how many laws are passed by Provincial Legislatures, no matter how many regulations are passed, I maintain that you cannot turn a Frenchman into an Englishman by process of legislation. I maintain that you cannot muffle a whole race by statute and that you cannot gag a rising generation by enacting a regulation on education—why? Simply because nature is stronger than the will of man. This is a natural law. We follow the law of nature, even when we do not think it; the work is being done even without an effort. Having read the history of this country and learned that at the Conquest there were in this country only 60,000 French-speaking citizens, and remembering the many efforts that have been made to have the French language disappear from our laws and from our practice, who can say with any appearance of sense, now that we are a people of two million and a half, that a by-law will endanger our national identity! No, Mr. Speaker, no man believes that. But this by-law does render less happy the lives of a number of law-abiding citizens of this country, and when you take away happiness from a portion of the people you are taking it away from the country at large, and you are doing an unpatriotic act. I believe that the more obstacles you put in the way of the the expansion of a nation, or in the way of its retaining its identity, the more you assure to it its perpetuation. This has been shown in the history of most nations where this problem has been dealt with. Do you want an example? Centuries ago descendants from the same stock, men of French origin, came into the new world. Part of them went towards what is now called Canada; the other part towards what is now called New Orleans. Both these parties were surrounded later on by an Anglo-Saxon population, and both encountered the same dangers of assimilation. And what was the result? In New Orleans the French language and the French identity of the early French settlers has practically disappeared. On the other hand, in this country the French language and the

French identity of the first settlers is stronger and more robust than it was at the time of the foundation of this country. What is the reason for this? It is because the settlers in New Orleans had no obstacles in their way, and because our national life has found the food that has given it its robustness and its strength. From the time of the Conquest the French language has been preserved, only because those who possessed and loved it have fought tooth and nail to keep it intact for themselves and their children.

Some of our Ontario friends say that English ought to be known by every person in this Dominion, and I entirely agree with that. Let me in a few words state our position in regard to the English and French languages. We consider a French education as a duty, and the acquisition of the English language as a necessity. We will not budge from our duty; we will remain Frenchmen. But we realize the necessity of a knowledge of English in all walks of life. The lack of it would be a serious handicap in the race for material success in life, not only in this country, but on the whole continent of America. We want every one of our children to know as much as possible of the beautiful English language. But we also want the country at large to know that, no matter what it costs, we will learn and keep learning the language that we have inherited from our fathers and mothers. Some speaker said yesterday: In matters of education, hands off Ontario, hands off Manitoba. I agree with that. But the legislature should also preserve untrammelled the rights of the subjects of a British country, no matter of what origin they are. We who are in possession of the French language, who consider it a treasure from the Atlantic to the Pacific, say to every one that the possession of that language is not limited by physical or by legal boundaries. We who are French Canadians also say: Hands off the French language.

A great deal has been said about this matter having been brought up as a political question. I am not here to speak for any one except myself. As far as I am concerned I would consider it a crime for any one to mix with the petty questions of politics a cause which to every French Canadian is sacred. From the high plane of the speeches that have been delivered in this House yesterday and to-day, I do not believe it has been in the mind of any one in this House to make this a question of

politics. Personally I have been taken to task by certain papers that I respect in our sister province, and whose main asset seems to be the great imagination of their editors. They have said that I had a resolution ready to put before the House, and that this was done because the leader of the Opposition was forced by a wing of his party to abstain from moving one, and that I was going to talk as the agent of the leader of the Opposition, and as the agent of the Liberal party. Let me tell you, Sir, that I am no more the agent of the Liberal party than I am a piece of the Tory machine. I am an Independent in this House, and I am an Independent because these are my convictions, and because this was my programme when I faced my electorate. I was elected here on condition that I would judge every question on its merits, and vote in favour of any motion, Bill or measure of any kind coming from the Liberal party, if it was good, and against any motion, Bill or measure coming from the Conservative party if I considered it bad. The small place I occupy in this House as representative of the county of Nicolet belongs to me. My vote also belongs to me, and I shall use both the way I please, without consulting any one. My judges will be the people whom I represent, the people of my race, and the public opinion of Canada. I am satisfied with them as judges, no matter how my words may be construed in this House to-night. But if I am an Independent, whether I support or combat any motion, measure or Bill coming from the Liberal or Conservative party, I have no hesitation in declaring that my hand is extended loyally to any public man in this House who has the strength and the courage to get upon his feet and defend his race and his language, and that my hand shall be withdrawn the moment I discover that others are ready to betray their race and their language. That is my position so far as politics are concerned.

Before closing my speech, I wish frankly and sincerely to make a moderate but forceful appeal—first, to my compatriots both on your left and on your right, Mr. Speaker, and ask them by their votes, if not by their speeches, to show that they sympathize with those of their own race who are suffering. Only a few days ago I received a letter, which cannot be read without the greatest emotion, from one of the members of this House who unfortunately is too sick to come here. I refer to our friend the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. Guilbault).

Our poor friend has no longer the use of his limbs, but his big heart is strong enough to drag his sick body into this House in order that he may vote in favour of the resolution of my hon. friend from Kamouraska. He begged me in his letter to make arrangements to have him carried here even if the consequences should be fatal. I went to see him in the hospital and endeavoured to dissuade him from that idea, but I promised him I would be his interpreter in this House in favour of the resolution when he wanted to support by his vote. I am telling you this, Sir, because I want to commend this example of one of my compatriots to my other compatriots in this House, especially to those who perhaps are inclined to be weak-kneed. This is an example that they ought to follow, and when they hear that a man who is not physically strong enough to stand up has the courage to ask to be carried here in order to give his vote in support of the resolution, those who are of more robust health will surely do no less.

Since yesterday it has been gossiped around the House that the great objection to voting for this resolution on the part of those who are sincere supporters of the Government, is that the resolution is not in the proper form, because, being moved as an amendment to the motion to go into

Supply, it may be considered as a motion of non-confidence in the Government. So far as I am concerned, even if that were the case, I would sooner vote non-confidence in any government than vote non-confidence in the French language. But it is not the case, and those interested will find the proper authorities in Hansard of 1900, under date of the 13th of March, page 1824, and also in Hansard of 1893, in the debate of the 21st of March, page 2401.

I wish also to make an appeal to all generous English-speaking members of this House, whether on the Conservative side or on the Liberal side, representing any of the provinces of Canada, to show their broad-mindedness towards the French minority by supporting this resolution. I make a special appeal to those English-speaking members who owe their seats in this House to a generous French-Canadian majority.

In a few months from now we shall be called upon to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Confederation. The buildings erected for the purpose of enabling the nation to send its representatives there to debate on serious questions has been destroyed. Let us not permit the country or the world to understand that the same disaster has happened to the principles laid down by the Fathers of Confederation.

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