

# French and English

Frictions and Misunderstandings

A few reflexions *a propos* of the

## Mayoralty Contest

— BY —

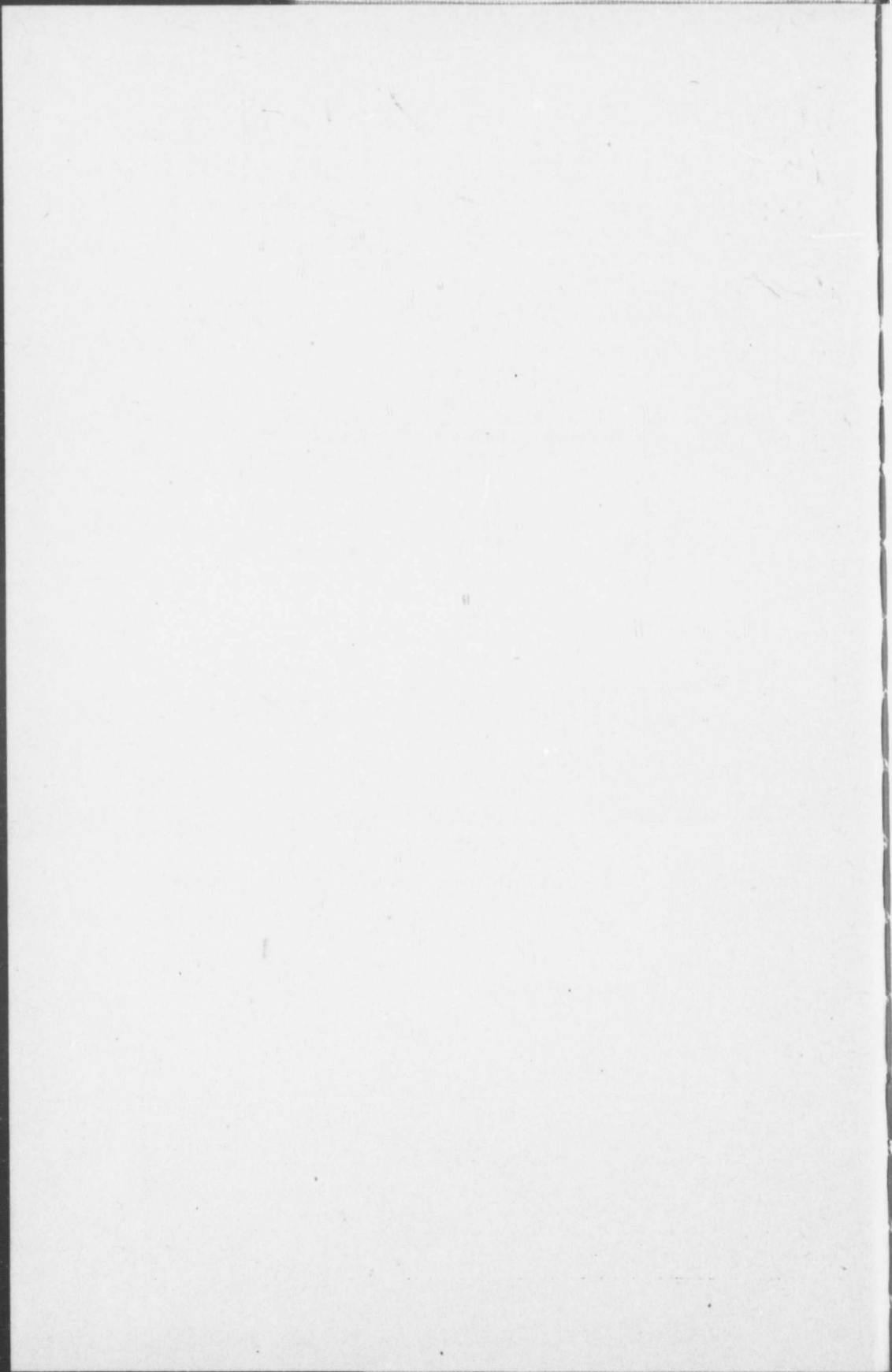
*HENRI BOURASSA*

With Preface-Letters  
from Mr C.-H. Cahan, K.C. and Mr J.-C. Walsh

PRICE : 5 CENTS

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## Letter from C. H. Cahan, K.C.

Henri Bourassa, Esq.,

Director of Le Devoir.

Dear Mr Bourassa:

I have read with great interest your four recent articles upon the relations of the French and the English in Canada, and, to me, it seems an excellent idea that you should publish in English your exposition of the views which are gathering strength in the minds of Canadians of French descent resident in this Province.

Your articles deal, chiefly, with two considerations:

First:—The attitude of English-speaking residents of the City of Montreal and of the Province of Quebec toward the great majority of the population who are of French descent and speak the French language; and

Second:—The attitude of the English minority, resident in the Province of Quebec, to the persistent efforts of the English majority of the Province of Ontario to restrict the teaching and use of the French language in that province.

In dealing with the attitude of the English minority in the Province of Quebec, it is helpful to consider the conditions in which that attitude has developed.

The leaders of the English financial group in the City of Montreal, the directors and officers of the banking, railway and commercial corporations, are largely recruited from other provinces of Canada, or from countries outside of Canada. Many of them had few opportunities in their youth to study the earlier political history of Quebec, and they have equally meagre knowledge of its literature and its traditions. In later years they have been so deeply engrossed in the material development of Canada that they have found little time to devote to those political and social studies which have been your almost constant employment. Their attitude is one of inoffensive indifference; and, until their industrial and commercial interests are really seriously affected, their intellectual interest will not be engrossed in the solution of the serious problems which are the subject of your discussion.

On the other hand, those English-speaking residents, who have been born and bred in this Province, sincerely appreciate and commend the generous spirit in which the confederation compromise has been adhered to by the French majority, particularly in the matter of the maintenance of English schools under the control of an independent board of English-speaking and protestant commissioners. But in the political affairs of the Province their direct representation and participation is gradually diminishing to almost the vanishing point.

In the Legislature of Quebec there are few English representatives,

and none who, in any especial sense, represents the views of the English minority of the City of Montreal. In the Government and Parliament of Canada the English of Quebec will have a constantly decreasing direct representation. Probably this is inevitable, owing to the ever increasing preponderance of the French majority in the electorate!

But though losing their direct representation, members of the English commercial community have sometimes sought to protect their business interests, and to a certain extent their political privileges, by personal solicitation and influence, by generous political subscriptions, and by persistently lobbying in the ante-rooms of the Legislature. In fact, such corrupt dealing as has prevailed at Quebec is, probably, largely due to the efforts of English-speaking residents of the Province to procure, by indirect methods, privileges and protection for corporate interests that would have been obtained in any other Province of Canada, at less expense and with far less effort, through direct political representation in the Legislature.

The politicians at Quebec are probably no more corrupt than at any other provincial capital; but they are undoubtedly subjected to far greater temptations.

In the Federal Government at Ottawa, outside of the one English Minister from this City, whose exceptional legal attainments and experience, and whose peculiar fitness as a representative Irishman, have raised him to a unique political eminence, the English of Quebec, and particularly of the City of Montreal, have no effective direct representation; and they see no reasonable prospect of obtaining any.

The result is that the predominating commercial interests, located in this Province, seek by cultivating personal relations with Ministers of the Crown from Ontario and elsewhere, and by associations with traders and manufacturers from other cities of the Dominion, to protect and to promote their special trading and manufacturing interest which are subject to federal legislation; and, with complete complacency, they leave to their French fellow-citizens in this Province of Quebec the selection and election of whomsoever they please as the representatives of Quebec in the Federal Parliament.

Now this gradual yet effective diminution of the direct influence of the English in political affairs at Quebec and at Ottawa, and their very natural, though not otherwise commendable, efforts to ensure, by indirect methods, the success of their business enterprises and political undertakings, determine in a large measure their attitude toward many other questions of supreme ethical importance, such as the policy of discriminating against bilingual schools in Ontario.

The English-speaking business man of Montreal is really desirous that the French-speaking residents of Ontario should enjoy the same liberties and privileges which he and his children enjoy in Quebec. He recognizes that under the political constitution of Canada, the measure of the concessions made to the minority in Ontario should and, in the final event, will be the measure of the concessions made to the English Minority in the Province of Quebec. But being in a minority in this province and deprived of any considerable direct representation either at Quebec or at Ottawa; compelled, as he thinks, to conserve his com-

mercial interests and to obtain commercial ends by business alliances and associations with similar commercial interests in other provinces, and particularly in the Province of Ontario, the English business man of Montreal, refrains from entering into inconvenient controversies with his confrères of Ontario, adopts the "practical" course of curtailing his expressions of opinion on all questions of race, religion and language, and relies upon methods, such as I have above suggested, for the conservation of his business interests.

But while I think I have fairly described the attitude of the English-speaking business man of Montreal, it must not be overlooked that a large number of English residents in this city do have warm personal friendship with their French fellow-citizens, do read the French journals, do sympathize largely with their views and aspirations, and do espouse their cause on all opportune occasions, both in private and in public. It is true that they usually prefer to converse in private or to speak from public platforms in the English language, probably — imputing my own personal inclinations to others, — because their lingual attainments are so meagre, that they deem it rather unnecessarily humiliating to themselves, and obviously discourteous to their auditors, to exhibit their deficiencies of expression and ridiculous crudities of accent and intonation, in using, or rather misusing the French language, before audiences of cultivated French Canadians who have quite thoroughly mastered both languages.

Perhaps, after all, I have not helped matters in making these explanations, but I am more concerned, at present, to commend the frank expression by you of the views of the French Canadian people, which certainly enable us the better to see ourselves as others see us. This is Canada's growing time; and I recall certain physical distresses of my own youth which sympathetic parents were wont to describe as "growing-pains". No growing nation can escape like discomforts, and usually their existence and frank recognition are both symptomatic of increasing good health.

Yours faithfully,

C. H. CAHAN.

Montreal, March 16th, 1914.

## Other People's Business

One day, some years ago, I went to the office of the Herald at so late and unusual an hour as to provoke inquiries. I explained that I had been around to the Monument National to hear a lecture by a French public man, an intimate of Mr Waldeck-Rousseau, then Prime Minister, who had quite casually given us the news of that statesman's approaching retirement. It was a very interesting afternoon; but I was suddenly aware that the man might just as well have been speaking in Paris as east of Bleury street, for all English-speaking Montreal knew or cared to the contrary. I rather liked the idea.

A street car ticket costs much less than an ocean passage, and there, across an unmarked boundary, were to be found, on occasion, the public men, the workers, the preachers one would like to see if he were in Paris.

Players from the French Conservatories were to be seen and heard in little theatres. No English was to be heard. No familiar west end faces were to be seen, unless, once in a while, a McGill professor or two appeared, giving one just the feeling experienced when one meets a friend from home in the Louvre, say, or Westminster Abbey. I have tried to make friends of mine share this fancy, tried to get them to see that across the language line there is another city here in Montreal that is well worth exploring, that the people who dwell in it are well worth knowing and that there are many whose society it is an honor to share. I must say, though, that I do not find many willing to give rein to the imagination. They find the shops on St. Lawrence Street inferior in attractiveness to those on St. Catherine street West; beyond that it is not worth their while to examine.

On the other hand, there is no scarcity of that very human passion, curiosity. People who do not read French confess they do not understand how an obviously intelligent person like Mr Bourassa reaches the curious opinions popular legend identifies with his name, but if he will only speak in English they will crowd to hear him; and when he writes in English they permit themselves the agreeable sensation of placing their minds alongside his, generally with the result of pronouncing him a quite commendably reasonable being.

I do not think it is too much to say that the series of articles here reproduced have been read with intense interest; nor that the state of mind of the normal French-speaking population, revealed by the articles, was entirely unsuspected. I do not find any who complain; the majority merely wonder.

There may be sections of the English-speaking community in Montreal with whom, because of their being steeped in certain opinions which have become difficult to differentiate from prejudices, the speaking of French is assumed to cover a set of tendencies so vicious that the whole is set down as reprehensible, and therefore not to be



encouraged. But in the mass I think it must be said that what looks to French-speaking Canadians as a denial of justice is not much more than a negation of interest. It probably requires a greater effort than most of us are willing to make, whatever language we speak, to get up an interest in the troubles of others. The very last thing any one wants to do, when he has the unbroken habit of filling his day with going to work, working and going home from work, is to bother about serious things outside that routine. Man is as indolent as he dare be, and indolence in matters of abstract speculation is a luxury not to be denied him.

Still, if these matters must be looked into, it has to be conceded that certain natural rights are as inalienable to one set of people as to another; that there are limits beyond which laws cannot be enforced against the assent of the governed; that the Scottish Covenanters refusing adherence to a law-made church, the English Nonconformists refusing support to law-made church schools, and the French-speaking parents of this country refusing to have their language stricken from the lips of their children in law-made schools, are all on exactly the same footing. Generally, indeed almost always, it happens that the essential justice of such resistance is unanimously conceded, but only long afterwards. There are few prepared to do, when such crises are actually upon them, what they say they would have done had they participated in crises long past. "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow." It was New England that caused the negro slave to be set free; but before that happened a New England mob had killed Lovejoy for his interest in the slave, and New England orators had pronounced that he died as the fool dieth, because law was against him.

We are not so bad as all that, hereabouts, for all the indifference we may mutually show concerning things on which others than ourselves are passionately interested. At heart, no Canadian will assent to seeing another Canadian wronged. Enlightenment is the first necessary step towards the restoration of concord if there exists a breach. Because by these articles he has let in the light, Mr Bourassa has rendered, to his own people and to the rest of us, an inestimable service.

J.-C. WALSH.

Montreal, March 15th, 1914.

*The following pages are the verbatim reproduction of four articles published in English in Le Devoir, from the 11th to the 14th of March 1914.*

## *The Mayoralty of Montreal*

### *The Racial Issue*

For a number of years, it has been the custom in Montreal of electing alternately an English- and a French-speaking mayor. To that usage there was no basis in law, in tradition or in equity: it was a pure evidence of courtesy and good will on the part of the French majority. Curiously enough, while a large number of English-speaking residents of Montreal have developed the conviction that they have a *right* to that alternate representation at the head of the civic administration, a counter-sentiment is fast spreading in the French community. That sentiment is being expressed in various terms and with different degrees of feeling and heat. It can be accurately compassed in three or four propositions, some of direct application to the present situation in Montreal, others bearing on the general relations between French and English (1) in Canada: "The English have no *right*, in law or equity, to rule the civic affairs of Montreal." — "The usage of electing alternately an English- and a French-speaking mayor is not a matter of *right* and ought not to become a *precedent*." — "The English-speaking minority of Montreal, as a whole, have not shown such sympathy to us that they deserve any special consideration." — "The English at large talk profusely of fair-play and broadmindedness when and where they are in the minority; they seldom put those virtues in practice, where they are the majority and when they can afford to assert their supremacy."

Those words are heard everywhere — on the street, in the tramways, in private circles. They are symptomatic of a deep change in the dispositions of the French-Canadians towards their English-speaking fellow-citizens.

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(1) Frequent mentions are made of "French" or "English", instead of "French speaking" or "English-speaking" Canadians or people. This is merely for the sake of shortness of speech. I refer only to the two main groups of Canadians as divided by language.

I also beg the English reader to make due allowance for all the in-corrections of a hurried and unrevised piece of work. He must not forget that my English prose is the product of the "primitive" bilingual school of French Quebec.

Heretofore, the French people of Montreal could be divided into three categories, in regard to that aspect of the civic life of our city. By far, the largest portion, imbued with the basic tradition of Confederation, were willing to let the English-speaking minority have their choice of the mayor, every second term, in spite of the fact that they form only twenty-five per cent of the total population of Montreal. A much smaller section submitted to this usage in grumbling, and with a more or less avowed determination of giving the English nothing but their due, as soon as they had a chance of doing so. Another class, also very limited in number, thought that in this respect, as in every other species of selection for public office, the "*best man*" ought to be elected or appointed, irrespective of race or creed.

If I may express my own feelings, I have placed myself long ago into that third category, and still think its principles ought to prevail — provided, of course, they are put into practice all over the land.

\* A few days ago, I met a young French-Canadian, bright, highly educated, broad minded. He used to belong to the first category. He is now to be counted in the second. He explained to me quite frankly why he did not feel like joining the third.

"It is all very well, said he, to talk of the *best man*; but it is just like the common *trash* about '*fair-play*'. Every time a public office occupied by an English-Canadian is vacated, the English claim the *right* to have it filled by one of their own; when a French official disappears, they talk benignly of appointing the '*best man*', irrespective of race or creed."

For this reason, and others, that class of totally unprejudiced men — who put personal merit above racial affinities — though far more numerous still in the province of Quebec than in English Canada, remain at a standstill in Montreal.

As regards the two other classes, the bare truth amounts to this : the first category has decreased enormously ; all its deserters have gone into the ranks of those who think and say that the English-speaking people of Montreal ought to be content with their due ; and among the rest, very few are disposed to put up a fight to elect an English-speaking mayor, on the ground that the English are entitled to that honour as a matter of *right*.

Now those sentiments spell danger to the peace and harmony which have prevailed for over one half of a century in the metropolis of Canada. They are bound to react on the whole national life of the country. To ignore them is dangerous and unpatriotic; to cover them with vague platitudes on the spirit of "*fair-play*" and the "*breadth of mind*" which ought to prevail in the community, is futile. It is far preferable, I think, to go to the root of things, find out the deep causes from which those sentiments have grown, and try to eradicate the germs.

This is what I, for one, am prepared to do in my humble sphere — in this paper and outside.

When we Nationalists talk to the people of our race, we endeavour to impress upon their mind the necessity of discriminating between the numerous English-speaking Canadians who bear then no ill will, and those who are narrow, bigoted and selfish; we advise them to look for

the sympathy and cooperation of the former in order to check the evil influence of the latter; and, above all, we invariably tell them that the most effective way of winning the respect and affection of their neighbours is to show *by deed*, more than by words, that they have the respect of themselves. In fact, our denunciations of corruption, of party slavery, of the lack of national pride and public spirit in our own ranks, have raised against us the hatred and the rancour of the crooked politicians, who call us the "detractors of our race".

In addressing myself now to the English community of Montreal, I deem it my duty to speak as plainly. Even at the risk of strengthening the absurd prejudice that I am antagonistic to every man and every thing British, I propose to express not merely my own feelings, but even those I do not share, but which are daily expressed by a growing number of French Canadians, who have not the occasion to know their English-speaking fellow-citizens and to make by themselves that discrimination just referred to.

### *The Municipal Elections of 1910*

The publication of *Le Devoir* was started on the eve of the great upheaval in municipal affairs, which brought the victory of February 1910. We were not the last to respond to the call of the good men who wanted to restore the fair name of the city and make honest municipal government a possibility. We made a special effort to assure the election of Mayor Guerin and Controller Wanklyn. Both in the paper and on the platform, we laid particular emphasis on the desirability, on the part of the French majority, of giving substantial evidence of their spirit of fair play. The last article published in *Le Devoir*, previous to the election, was a warm appeal for Mr Wanklyn. The result was, that while, in several of the English wards, many votes were *plumped* for Mr Wanklyn, that gentleman received in the French section the same support as the French candidates supported by the Citizens' Association. In fact, he came at the head of the poll, in the whole city.

How those particular services have been appreciated and requited by the English press and the English leaders of Montreal is a matter of small concern.

Immediately after the election, we strongly urged the re-opening of the Cannon enquiry. We insisted on the necessity of bringing the search light, not only upon the squad of firemen from St. Eloi, or the few cartloads of municipal cinders appropriated by Alderman Martin, but also on the big "deals": the franchises granted to private companies, the expropriations by the millions, and the large issuings of bonds. We claimed that not only the small pilferers, but also the big *operators*, must be brought to task; and that all evil-doers, whether big or small, the stock exchange prince as well as the ward politician, should be arrested and brought before the Criminal Courts.

Nothing was done. The new administration, the Citizens' Association and the Attorney General of the province—as by a kind of tacit understanding — left matters at a stand still. No punishment for the small boodlers; no search for the large *melon-slicers*.

The result was that, two years later, several of the "Twenty-Three" came back and were elected, in spite of the fiery denunciations of the English press of Montreal. I should rather say, *because* of those denunciations. The truth of this is frankly acknowledged by Mr J.-C. Walsh in his latest "*Moccasin*". The truth goes further, and ought to be told plainly.

It was whispered, the other day, that the chief reason for which Major Stephens declined at first the candidature for the mayoralty was not the doubt as to his qualification, but that his friends had found out that he would be opposed by the *Star*, the *Herald-Telegraph*, and the *Standard*, and be assured of nothing better than the neutrality of the *Gazette*.

This was, I confess, a matter of surprise to many of us, French-Canadians. To think that our English-speaking fellow-citizens could be influenced, at least in municipal matters, by the three organs of Sir Hugh Graham, or any one of them, surpasses our powers of comprehension.

True, those journals have some influence upon the French vote — but not that which should frighten the right kind of Candidates. Thousands of French voters are prepared to uphold a candidate opposed by the tricolored staff of public instructors who draw their varied inspirations from the same sinister source. Likewise, they are instinctively disposed to boycott any candidate supported by the same influence. Rightly or wrongly, what has leaked out in the quarrel between Sir Hugh Graham and Mr Lorne McGibbon, the suppressed evidence in the Quebec scandal enquiry, the fuliginous and fugacious attitude of Sir Hugh on many questions of public interest, his apparent lack of conviction in all matters of national import, — have convinced the French electors of Montreal that this kaleidoscopic and greedy personage is far more dangerous to the welfare of the community than any of the "Twenty Three", or the whole of them in a bunch.

The idea that organs of public opinion, thus bought, sold, rebought and resold, and tossed up in that cynical fashion, for the sole purpose of bringing fat returns to the manipulators, can be and *are* the indication of the mentality and public spirit of the English-speaking community of Montreal; that such papers can exercise, and *do* exercise, an influence over the opinions of that powerful community — this idea in itself is sufficient to deepen the gulf between the two races.

\* \* \*

This brings us to the crux of the situation. The French and English do not know and understand each other thoroughly; they ignore their best individual and racial characteristics; they seldom meet but in the sphere of business or politics, where they are far from showing what is best in them. On the contrary, in those fields, they often display their worst tendencies: greediness, selfishness, instinct of domination, lack of public spirit. English sharks snatch millions and purchase governments; French boodlers rest content with the small pilferings of the retail trade. The former hide their traces with care; the latter show their spots with cynical carelessness.

The good English people say that the French politicians are corrupt ; the honest French retort that the English are hypocrites.

Both sets of performances are bad for the State and detrimental to public morality. Neither standard of ethics tends to develop in each community a sense of mutual respect and confidence in each other.

This deplorable lack of proper knowledge and thorough understanding between the two communities is strongly marked throughout Canada. Outside of Quebec, it is easily explainable and partly excusable.

In this province, in this city, it may be explained, it cannot be excused nor justified.

Although the French-Canadians are partly responsible for this state of things, truth compels one to say that by far the greater responsibility rests with the English-speaking community of Montreal.

### *Tolerance of the French. — Attitude of the English.*

Confined in their opulent and closed quarters, proud of their shops, their factories, their banks, their Stock Exchange and their Board of Trade, strongly inclined to self-esteem and self-admiration, the English-speaking residents of Montreal, as a whole, have made no effort to *know* their French-speaking fellow-citizens, to learn their language, to understand their traditions and their aspirations, to observe with a keen eye and a sympathetic mind their qualities and their defects.

Very few of those among them who are well disposed towards the French — and they are legion — have availed themselves of the propitious occasions to express their good feelings in a tangible manner, and to enable the French to make that proper discrimination to which I referred previously.

In the full enjoyment of the amplest measure of liberty, of privileges, of public honours, which has ever been granted by a majority to a minority of different race, language and creed, they have never shown any thorough appreciation of that exceptional treatment.

Mind you, I am not referring to such rights or privileges as are guaranteed to the minority by the law of the land, written or unwritten. I mean those privileges which have been freely granted to them by the French majority, and never encroached upon, while the same privileges were and are still denied to the French minority, or taken from them, in every English province of Canada. I mean especially the numerous evidences of generous confidence given by the French-Canadians, in electing English-speaking representatives to posts of honour and trust.

A large portion of the English-speaking people seem to think that those privileges and honours belong to them by right of seniority, or that they gained them through their own effort or their outstanding superiority, and therefore that they have not incurred the slightest debt of gratitude towards the French majority.

This utter lack of appreciation, on the part of the English, of the tolerant spirit so frequently evinced by the French, their remarkable ignorance of the historical causes and the deep rooted motives of that tolerance, have contributed more than any thing else perhaps in making the French-Canadians grow stiff and diffident.

How many English-speaking people, born and brought up right here in Montreal, know that the province of Quebec is the *first spot*, in the whole British Empire, where all citizens were placed on a footing of absolute equality in matters of civil rights? where all dissentient protestants were given the same privileges as those of the Roman Catholic Church or the Churches of England and Scotland, many years before they were freed in England, more than a century before all tests and disabilities against Roman Catholics were abolished in Great Britain and Ireland? where all the civil and political disabilities of the Jews were removed, more than twenty years before they disappeared in Great Britain?

All this, and more in the same line, was accomplished by the elected representatives of French Canada, in spite of the ill will and against the opposition of English governors and some of the leaders of the then small English community of Montreal.

How many Methodists, Baptists, Free Presbyterians, in Montreal, know that as far back as in 1827, Papineau, — that arch-“rebel” and “French demagogue”, — was appealing to the electorate of Montreal-West to help him in maintaining on the statute books of the province dispositions giving to all protestant communities the same right to keep civil records of birth, marriages and death, as was enjoyed by the Roman Catholics and the established Churches of England and Scotland? Those laws had been voted several times by the French assembly, but mutilated by the Council and the judges, at the beck of Lord Dalhousie, as contrary to the British constitution. In his supreme appeal to the mixed electorate of Montreal-West, to help him in doing justice to all, Papineau was opposed by Peter McGill, founder of the great university which bears his name.

The words then uttered by the “French demagogue” may be read with interest and profit, even today:

“I recall these circumstances only to declare my unalterable creed that men are accountable for their faith and worship to their Maker only, and not to the civil powers; that diversity of religious opinions which creates no resistance to the laws, ought not to be submitted to the oppression of laws enacted merely to prohibit and punish it; that the same freedom in that respect, which I claim for myself, for my countrymen, for those who have the same belief with them, I allow to those whose belief is different; that persuasion, teaching, the practise of virtues, the weight of good examples are the legitimate means of free conversions, without any improper interference of punishment or exclusive temporal advantages offered by the laws; that the Governments which, without distinction, impose equal charges on all the citizens, owe them all equal protection, and a common participation in the advantages, as they have it in the burthens; in the public offices as they have it in the public contributions of the community”.

Such was *then* the spirit of the French-Canadians, in matters of creed and language. Such it is *now*. They have *always* and *every where*, in Canada, acted according to that spirit. But they are beginning to ask themselves: “How have we been requited? How have we been teated outside of Quebec? What sympathy has the minority in Quebec shown to us or to French minorities in the English provinces?”

### *Representation of Mixed Communities.*

On some fitting occasion, years ago, in the House of Commons, I pointed out the fact that not only in Montreal, but in numerous towns and counties in Quebec, overwhelmingly French and Catholic, English-speaking and protestant representatives were elected ; whilst the counter-part is never or most rarely shown in mixed communities where the majority is English-speaking and protestant. One English paper in Montreal commented on this. It admitted the facts and their contrasts. But the conclusion it drew therefrom was, not that the French-Canadians were more generous than their English-speaking fellow-citizens, but simply that they had found out that their affairs were better managed by Anglo-Saxons than by themselves !

That this "broad" sentiment is not isolated was confirmed several years later, when a distinguished French-Canadian from Ontario stated at a public banquet in Montreal : "You, French people of the province of Quebec, in Montreal especially, have no idea of the harm done to us by your excessive generosity towards the English minority, as regards civic and parliamentary representation. Far from helping us in getting fair treatment at the hands of the majority in Ontario, that generosity is looked upon as an evidence of your self-confessed inferiority. The English in Ontario think and say that the French in Quebec frequently elect English-speaking representatives, for the simple reason that they have no fit men among themselves to manage their public affairs."

As a living example, he quoted the city of Ottawa, where, for a certain time, the same kind of tacit understanding as existed in Montreal brought the alternate election of an English-speaking and a French-speaking mayor. The "pact" was broken... by the English; and it is next to impossible now for the French to put one of their own at the head of civic affairs — though their numerical proportion is far larger than that of the English-speaking people in Montreal.

\* \* \*

Upon the respective capacity of either race for the management of public affairs, I need not dwell at length. Both have given to the State, in all spheres of national or civic life, a few men of high merit, a fair proportion of good men, and a good number of incapable or corrupt men.

The lamentable and ludicrous manner in which the "big men" representing the Board of Trade and the "big interests" of English Montreal were stampeded and played upon by Sir Lomer Gouin, Alderman L.-A. Lapointe, Mr Perron and Mr Robert, — and Sir Hugh Graham behind the screen, — in 1911, over the Tramways' deal ; the fits of hysteresis through which the same "big men" passed after the burst of the water main conduit, — which, by the way, was under the special guardianship of controller Godfrey, — these and various other instances have not shown that the English-speaking "business men" of Montreal have all the requisites of public men. In their respective spheres of private activity, they are undoubtedly a notable body of strong individuals. In their own business they have achieved remarkable success. But in the realm of public affairs, they lack, to a singular degree, breadth of scope, general information, a good intellectual training, and



above all a thorough knowledge of the people with whom they live and upon whose support and cooperation they must count to accomplish something in that sphere.

As Mr J.-C. Walsh has just told them: "*One has to have the instinct of social justice rather highly developed... to make one not merely a business man but a public-business man.*"

These admirable words ought to be inscribed at the head of each page of the diary on which every business man in Montreal, both English and French, marks down the maturation of his bills payable or receivable, and his business appointments.

Since I am dealing with the English alone for the present, I have no hesitation in saying that this lack of the "instinct of social justice" is precisely what has gradually brought the two races farther apart than they were twenty-five or fifty years ago in Montreal.

This has been remarkably exemplified in all matters relating to language.

### *The French language in Public Services.*

A few years ago, a movement was started in this province to induce, and if need be, to force the various companies, doing public service *in the province*, to put the language of the vast majority of the people of this province on a *footing of equality* with the language of the minority; or, in other words, to make an equal use of the two official languages of Canada — as it is done in Belgium, in Switzerland, in every bilingual country.

What is to be wondered, what would be a cause of astonishment in any civilised country, is that the state of thing which brought up that movement was ever allowed to exist.

But the fact was there. Railway companies, express companies, tramway companies, telegraph and telephone companies, all incorporated in Canada, under Canadian laws, most of them subsidised by the people of Canada — French as well as English — all of them dealing in this province, had never made use, in their relations with the public, of one single word of the language spoken by eighty per cent of the population of this province, by over sixty per cent of the people of this city.

Now, apart from the general and higher aspect of the question, there is a very practical side to it. Every time an individual deals with one of those companies, he virtually becomes party to a contract. Every railway or tramway ticket bought, every bill of lading signed, every blank form of telegraphic message filled up and signed, is a contract, containing many specific conditions, the knowledge of which is of immediate and personal importance to the individual who deals with the company.

Is it not preposterous to think that, for years and years, the companies doing public service in this province never thought of giving to the vast majority of their clients the advantage of reading those conditions in their own language?

Let every fair-minded and sensible English-speaking citizen of

Montreal make an effort of altruistic imagination. Suppose all the public services, not in Quebec, but in Ontario, or New-Brunswick, or Manitoba, communicated with the public of those provinces in the French language *only*. How long would the English majority in those provinces stand it?

Now, when that movement was started in Quebec, how was it received by the English-speaking public at large, and by the companies interested?

Apart from the venerable Lord Bishop of Quebec, and a mere handful of enlightened English people, who heartily approved of it, it was treated by the English press, and by the mass of the English-speaking public of Quebec, either with indifference, derision or hostility.

The initiators of the movement, and those of us who supported them, in the legislature, in the press or on the platform, were styled as "racial agitators" and "demagogues".

One hundred and ten years after the first Assembly in Quebec had given equality of rights to all protestant communities, it took two years of effort and agitation to enable Mr Lavergne to bring through that same Assembly, a piece of legislation binding the companies doing public service in Quebec to put the language of the majority on the same footing as that of the minority.

This was carried only in the teeth of the companies, who fought the bill before both houses of parliament. Their joint counsel was precisely Mr R. C. Smith, K.C., who had, the other day, the good sense to refuse the candidature for the mayoralty of Montreal. Mr Smith is undoubtedly an able lawyer and an amiable gentleman. But he must be very little versed in the ethics of a mixed community like this, to have accepted to put before the Legislature a plea which amounted to this: the corporations serving the public of this province, and making their money largely with the people of this province, should not be forced to submit to the rules of common sense, not to speak of courtesy, and deal with the majority of their clients in their own language — and, let it not be forgotten, one of the official languages not only in the province but in the whole Dominion!

Especially, the "big men" at the head of those corporations must have lacked the slightest touch of the "instinct of social justice", when they directed their counsel to put up such a plea. And the English-speaking journalists and leaders of opinion in this province must have had a very rudimentary apportionment of the same instinct, not to have cried "shame" on those "big business men".

After the bill was made law, the companies considered seriously whether they would test its constitutionality in the courts. They finally decided to let matters go; and they started to conform themselves to the law with the least *empressement* possible.

As recently as in december last, I waited half an hour at the office of the Dominion Express Co., on St. James street, to get a receipt in French for a parcel sent to Saint-Jérôme. After the clerks had ransacked the whole office, they had to admit they had none at hand. One official told me they had used so many of them, that the supply had run short. Another informed me that they used those French forms so rarely that he did not know where they could be found! The re-

ceipt in French was mailed to my office, *the next day*. Is that what the "big business men" call "expedition in business", or "full consideration" for the "susceptibilities" of the French-Canadians?

It has taken years to bring the Bell Telephone Co. of Montreal to send accounts and notices in both languages. It is but the other day that a new exchange having been opened in the northern part of Montreal, all notices sent to the French subscribers were printed in English alone.

It is but in the last two or three years that the French in Ottawa, who are one third of the population, have succeeded in getting telephone operators to understand and speak French. On that basis, all telephone communications in Montreal, where all English-speaking people form between one-fourth and one-third of the population, should have been given in French alone. What would the "big business men" of Montreal think of it?

### *The French-Canadian, a "nuisance."*

It is but this last autumn that our attention was called to the fact that the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. had been circulating all summer, at the Ghent Exhibition, in the midst of a semi-French community as Belgium is, a book containing the most grotesque references to the French-Canadians.

True, after the note of protest published in *Le Devoir*, the official in charge of the advertising department of the company — a very courteous gentleman, born and brought up in England, — immediately wired to London to stop the circulation of that absurd publication. But what is incredible is that such stuff could have been purchased and put into circulation by the C. P. R.

It is but this week that a gentleman high in authority here has received from London a clipping from an English paper, the *Cambridge Times*, which I have now on my table. It purports to be the verbatim reproduction of a letter written by one E. F. PAGE, said to occupy "an important position in the audit office of the Canadian Pacific Railway."

The letter covers two columns, small text. It contains a good deal of accurate information as to facts and figures, both as regards Canada in general and Montreal in particular. But of his French fellow-citizens this "official" of the C. P. R. has nothing to say beyond this short and sweet *appreciation*:

**"More than half of the inhabitants [of Montreal] are French Canadian. They do not appear very progressive, and generally speaking, are a NUISANCE! Until one remembers these are not Parisians, you (or "one"? can wonder if the politeness of the Frenchman is a dead number.**

That the French-Canadians in Montreal have lost a good deal of their simple and instructive refinement of old, I am fully prepared to admit, and to deplore. But when one compares them, class by class, to their equals in education or in so-called social rank, among the English community of Montreal, what one "wonders" is that there should

remain what remains of their "politeness" of old — not perhaps in the kind of people which may be met by the high or low officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but in the real good French-Canadians; and these, it must be admitted, are to be found still in the intellectual and modest spheres, or even in the tool shops or on the farm, rather than among the plundering politicians or the *bourgeois cossus*, who meet the English-speaking *parvenus* on boards of directorship or in so-called "fashionable clubs".

Now the sentiment which that typical Englishman, of the over-bearing class — and it is legion — has expressed in his blunt fashion, is, in the mind of the average French-Canadian, entertained, though seldom expressed in such plain words, by a more or less numerous category of English-speaking Canadians. He feels that he is looked upon as being a "nuisance" — and he resents it, even when he is courted at election times.

In almost every place he goes and meets his English-speaking neighbours, upon most of the occasions he has of dealing with them, if he ventures to make use of his language he seldom meets but the coldest reception and the scantest measure of courtesy — when he is not subjected to insolence or contumely.

This I state after repeated experiences, by myself and others, in banks, in offices of various kinds, in stores and other private concerns, right here in Montreal, — not to speak of public offices and railway carriages, including those of the Intercolonial Railway — the "Canadian people's road".

It is an actual fact that a French-Canadian, speaking French in London — I mean London, England, of course — has more chance of receiving a courteous and intelligible reply, than in any English town of Canada, and even in many English sections of Montreal.

It may be thought that I insist too much on this question of language. I do so purposely, because it is essentially *the* source most constantly productive of misunderstanding and frictions. It is ever so in every mixed community; it was and is still so in Belgium, for example. But there, at least, people of both races have made an honest and intelligent attempt to reach a solution of the problem, and they have succeeded largely.

What the average French-Canadian cannot understand is the neglect or the unwillingness of most English-Canadians to acquire the knowledge of the language of one-third of the people of Canada. He still less comprehends that the English colony of Montreal should be so *backward* as not to make an effort to understand and speak the language of the vast majority of their fellow-citizens, especially when he compares their lacking in that respect to the efforts he has made to acquire a fair knowledge of English.

To the argument that English is far more useful than French in the conduct of business and the acquisition of wealth, he replies that business and money are not all, nor even the main things in national and social life. He knows that all well bred men and women in the civilised world consider that their education is not complete, unless it includes the knowledge of the highest form of human word in modern times, as Greek was in days of old. He thinks that apart from all national con-

siderations, the English community of Montreal, having achieved such remarkable success in the sphere of business, should now have the nobler ambition to raise themselves above the inferior level of mercantilism and take rank with the cultured classes of all civilised countries, who make use of the French language as the international vernacular of all superior thoughts and aspirations.

Above all, he cannot understand why the English minority in Quebec should evince so little sympathy for the efforts pursued by French minorities in the English provinces of Canada, in Ontario especially, to maintain their right of having their language taught in the schools supported largely with their taxes.

### *The French language in Ontario*

When the Ontario government adopted their famous educational Regulation No XVII, before addressing one word of protest to my own compatriots, I wrote a personal letter to every English member of both branches of the Quebec Legislature and of the Protestant Committee of Public Instruction. In that letter, accompanied with a full copy of the Regulation, I called the attention of the representatives of the English minority here, to the contrast between the liberty they enjoy in this province in respect of education, and the harsh treatment meted out to the French in Ontario. Finally, I asked their opinion as to the value of that regulation, from the treble point of view of moral equity, pedagogic efficacy, and conformity to the principles of Confederation.

The answers received from highly cultured men were unanimous in their condemnation of the odious policy pursued by the Ontario Government. Prof. Dale condemned it as "*a violation of the spirit of Confederation*". Prof. Fryer called it an "*attempt to anglify the French School, in Ontario*",... "*a disregard of well defined rights*", and stated that it "*cannot be defended upon educational grounds*". Dr Leacock said it "*violated all the traditions on which the public policy of this country has been founded.*"

Those sentiments were echoed by Major Geo. W. Stephens, present candidate to the mayoralty, and by Mr W. D. Lightall and Mr John Boyd. But apart from those isolated sympathies, our protest found no response among the English-speaking politicians and "business men" of this province or city. One of them, Dr Finnie, M.L.A., had the candour to write that on the whole he thought those dispositions offered "*a great advantage*" to French children in Ontario. Mind you, dispositions that have been described by a distinguished English-speaking educationalist of Ontario in these terms: "Unless those regulations purport to eradicate the French language, they are the work of madness itself!"

True, a few articles, sympathetic to the French in Ontario, appeared in the Montreal English papers — one of them especially in the *Witness*, when still under Mr Dougal's management. But those articles generally contained nothing more than the expression of casual interest in a matter of secondary concern.

When the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society took the initiative of the

"*Sou de la pensée française*" to help the Ontario minority, the *Herald*, then under Mr Brierley's control, denounced the movement as "unwise". The *Star*, on its street posters, though not in its columns, warned the passers-by, on Saint-James street, that this was not the *tag-day* which was expected.

Later on, Mr O'Hagan, a veteran educationalist of Ontario, a vigorous and polished writer, sent a short article in defence of the French in Ontario. Similar contributions had appeared in the *Toronto Globe*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and various other papers of all shades. This was returned, with scant courtesy, on the ground that it was "not available for the columns" of the *Montreal Star*. The Empire-saviours, dreadnought-builders and tramway-schemers, who operate under the guidance of Sir Hugh Graham, once frantically denounced Reciprocity as a threat to the existence of the French language and the Catholic religion. Later on, they conducted, in various French papers, a most dangerous campaign on racial grounds in support of their navy schemes. But now, when the French language is actually sapped at its very basis in the largest English province of Canada, a short and properly argued defence of that language is "not available" for its columns!

Now, all those things are known and recorded by the French-Canadians: what thoughts and feelings are apt to germinate in their minds?

### *Comparisons and Contrasts*

Here again I ask the English in Quebec, in this city especially, to make another effort of altruistic thought. Suppose the Quebec Government decided that the French language should be the only medium of tuition for all class matters in every English separate school in Quebec; that the use of English were *tolerated* in the two first courses, and, if the school authorities allowed it, in further courses, *so long only as the English children were unable to take up all matters in French*; and that French-catholic inspectors extraordinary, not knowing a word of English, were appointed over and above the English inspectors, to see that the law is enforced. How long would they stand it? Would Dr Finnie, and others of his kind, assert brazenly that those regulations were "a great advantage" to the English children of Montreal?

No! As Mr Cahan once said in his picturesque language, a blue flame would arise from Westmount, encircle Mount-Royal, and within twenty-four hours, set the whole of English Canada on fire, from Sydney to Vancouver.

Would the *Montreal Herald*, under liberal, conservative or tramway control, deprecate the movement as "unwise"? Would the *Montreal Star* shut its columns to one single protest against the unfair treatment meted out to the English minority?

Now, the situation just described is exactly that made to the French minority in Ontario, under Regulation XVII, *as amended to conciliate the French and give them "fair play"!*

There are to be found, in modern history, but two similar cases of tyranny exercised by a dominant majority over a minority, in educa-

tional matters: Ireland, under the sword of Oliver Cromwell, and the Grand Duchy of Posen, under Prussian domination.

Surely the "instinct of social justice" is alive enough in the breast of the "business men" and journalists who lead the English community of Montreal, to tell them that those "precedents" are not fit to prevail in any free British community in America, on the threshold of the XXth Century; that there is no reason, in law, in equity, in history, to justify the application of such a régime to the French in Ontario, when the English in Quebec are given absolute liberty to educate their children as they please!

Let the English in Quebec remember that their rights in matters of education, whether religious or linguistic, rest on exactly the same constitutional basis as those of the French in Ontario. If it is legal, equitable, or, as Dr Finnie puts it, of "*a great advantage*", to restrict in that manner the teaching of French in Ontario, it would be as legal, — and a majority of people might find it equally just and "advantageous" — to restrict in the same manner the teaching of English in Quebec.

The idea of retaliation is beginning to take root in this province. It is yet subdued and unexpressed in public, but it is growing, sullenly, slowly, but surely.

Both in private or in public, I have invariably deprecated the thought of revenge. On every possible occasion, on the stump, in this paper, in social circles, I have always contended that a wrong cannot be corrected by another wrong; that the French, in Canada as in Europe, should always, at any price, lead in the path of enlightenment, of social justice, of mental progress; that whatever social injustice, or narrow and stupid pedagogy, prevail in other quarters, the French-Canadians should persistently preach and practice the doctrine that the knowledge of both French and English is a necessity in this country, as well as an intellectual accomplishment in all countries; that they should fight persistently for the maintenance and triumph of that doctrine against all odds; that a day will surely come, sooner or later, when the English-speaking Canadians, those of Montreal among the first, will realise that in this respect they have erred and remained below the educational and social standard of their French-speaking fellow-citizens; that all the leading men of both races will eventually make an equal use of both languages, and then the bilingual question will soon be solved.

This is the doctrine which we, bad nationalists, have *invariably* preached and practised from the inception of our movement.

But I must confess that our arguments are losing ground with a growing number of our people. The English "big bugs" of Montreal would be surprised to hear the retorts we receive at times, in private, from some French-Canadian politicians and "business men", who flatter them in their presence, but curse them the moment their backs are turned.

They will soon convince themselves that the outspoken and "impractical" nationalist is a far "safer" man, and a truer friend of the English, than the cringing party politician, or the money-sucker, or the place-seeker.

Short of the "instinct of social justice", their sole interest — interest in their own welfare, interest in the general peace and prosperity of the country — should tell them that they ought to take the lead in the crusade for the triumph of equal justice to all minorities, and the maintenance of the principle of equality of rights, for both races, all over the land.

Upon that principle Confederation was built, old feuds were pacified. Upon that principle alone Confederation shall stand, and peace and harmony prevail.

### *Conclusion.*

In conclusion of this rambling through the field of national history and psychology, may I refer the English reader to one of my first expressions of sympathy on their behalf, after the foundation of this paper?

Four years ago, I wrote an article in which I strongly urged the English minority to take a more active and sympathetic interest in our public affairs. Pointing out the inconveniences resulting from their lack of activity in that respect, I suggested that every constituency which elects one English- and one French-speaking representative, should send the French to Ottawa and the English to Quebec. I insisted on the necessity of the English selecting their "best men" to sit in our councils.

Only one English paper in Montreal daigned take notice of that article; and it was to reproduce only those portions of it which might grate the nerves of its readers. Those paragraphs which invited the active cooperation of the English minority were carefully left aside. Another fine sample of "fair play".

In spite of this and many other similar experiences, I firmly adhere to those ideas. I am still prepared to stand by the doctrine of the "most qualified", irrespective of race or creed. But I respectfully advise our English-speaking fellow-citizens to meditate upon the facts I have presented to them, to talk less about their *rights* and to think more of their duty, — duty to themselves, duty to their neighbours, duty to the whole community to which they belong, as much as the French, — whether the community be the City, the Province, or the Country.

If they do so with an open mind, and act accordingly with a stout heart, they may, and will surely, regain the esteem, the confidence and the affection of the vast majority of their French-speaking fellow-citizens.

Should they refuse to do so, and persist in living in this City and Province, as a group of isolated Uitlanders, wealthy, self-satisfied and self-contained, with no care for their French-speaking neighbours,---except on such occasions as when French votes are needed to elect an English-speaking mayor — then, they will be primarily responsible for the evil consequences to the City, to the Province, to the Country at large. They will be the closest allies of the lowest type of French demagogues, who will call upon the support of their compatriots in favour of any French candidate to public functions, corrupt or incompetent as he may be, against



any English-speaking competitor. They will, in short, be the most active factor in the growing estrangement between the two races.

The English minority in Quebec, the Montreal group especially, thanks to their wealth, their business ability and their spirit of enterprise, can and do play, in the affairs of the nation, a part far more important than their proportionate number. It is up to them to play that part for the good or for the curse of this country.

No one wishes more ardently than myself that they should do it in the right way.

**Henri BOURASSA.**

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