

We can have no illusion. Efforts have been made to strangle the liberty of education. One is not free to think when one is not free to propagate one's thoughts publicly, and one is not free to think when one is not permitted to have one's children brought up in accordance with one's ideas, conviction and faith. To suppress the liberty of education, the government dares not act openly, but invokes hypocritically a law of which the apparent and declared object was to extend the scope of the liberties indispensable to a democracy. . . . To grant the monopoly of education to one party doctrine and opinion is to establish a censorship over matters of public instruction, to organize the servitude of thought, and to prepare political tyranny.

This is what the élite of the French littérateurs think of the school policy of the French government. Let me tell my friend from Grey that he is greatly mistaken if he really believes that the denominational schools in France have produced a race of illiterates. Surely, Mr. Speaker, the land of Racine, of Molière, of Corneille, of Bossuet, is not a land of illiterates? Surely the schools and the lycées which have produced men like Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Thiers and Guizot, were not mere hotbeds of ignorance and cretinism! The hon. gentleman, in his endeavour to give the public schools a superiority over the denominational schools, might have spared his French Canadian friends in the House his untimely reference to the so-called illiteracy of Frenchmen. For my part, Sir, I am a British subject, and an admirer of the British institutions. I may add that, politically speaking, I am more at home in London than in Paris—that my ideals in politics are at Westminster, not at the Palais Bourbon; yet no one will ever deny—I for one will never do so—that in literature and in fine arts, France is second to no other nation in the world. But if France is still, at the beginning of this twentieth century, the leading nation of the world in the field of literature and fine arts, she has nothing to regret of the teachings given to her sons in the old church schools.

Reference has been made during this debate to the American settlers in the west. We are told that we must have public schools, because the settlers happen to come from across the boundary line, where a system of public schools exists. In other words, we must ignore the spirit and the letter of our constitution because the Americans are coming to our country. I shall not discuss the school system as it exists in the United States, but I have enough pride in the institutions of my country to believe that our system is not inferior to theirs. I have enough patriotism to stand by the rights of a Canadian minority, even if it does not suit the American settlers. And I am amazed, Sir, to see the ultra loyalist element of Canada so subservient to the desires, to the wishes, of the newcomers. Let them come from Dakota, from Arkansas, Illinois, or from any other

Mr. LEMIEUX.

state of the union. I do not object to that; but, in the name of common sense and for our own dignity, let us not trample upon our own constitution because it happens to please these people.

Sir, it has been suggested in the course of this debate that the Northwest Act of 1875 provided only for a temporary state of things. There is no such declaration in the Act. Let me say, Sir, that the men who enacted that law had taken part in the battle for confederation. They knew what had been the stumbling block of the union and what compromise had been reached. They, therefore, deliberately pledged the faith, the honour of parliament, that as long as there would be a Catholic minority in the west it would be entitled to its schools. Thirty years have elapsed since 1875. The separate school system has been adopted, and to-day we are told that those who have settled in the west with that guarantee should do without it. The Act of 1875 was passed under Mr. Mackenzie's government, and it was supported by Sir John Macdonald. It was amended in 1882 under a Conservative administration, and the separate school system was maintained.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, that in the British empire, if there was some sympathy for the Uitlanders, it was because it was asserted that President Kruger had not kept faith with them. In 1880 President Kruger went to London, and he then invited immigration to the Transvaal, promising the immigrants full citizenship. I have read several books on the South African war, and in them I found that the chief cause of the war was the lack of faith of Kruger in his stringent naturalization laws. Sir, laws concerning education are also with us fundamental laws. We enjoy religious liberty in Canada. Religious education is to a large degree considered essential by Roman Catholics. Why then should we deprive them of their right to schools?

Mr. Speaker, we are told, those of us who favour this measure, that we should trust the western people. Such is the language of the 'Globe', such is the language of the Toronto 'News.' For my part, I would trust, and I do trust, the western people as well as the eastern people; but the present issue has been made a religious one. The protests which have been made from the pulpit, the petitions which have been sent to this House, all bear the mark of religion. We have had petitions from the Orange Order, from the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Methodists; and there is between the opponents of the separate schools and the opponents of the public schools such a wide breach that, if left to the popular vote in the west, it would be impossible to bridge the difficulty. Those who sincerely believe in the separate school system would soon come to grief, because their opponents are unquestionably the majority. Besides the opposition to the separate schools seems to be doctrinal, and I do not see how you could reconcile both