

FRENCH OF ONTARIO AIR THEIR GRIEVANCES

Complaint That Bilingual Regulations Are Unfair

COMPARED WITH S. AFRICA

Mr. Mageau Asks for Return—Government Stands by Regulation 17—Mr. Rowell States the Liberal Policy—Return to be Issued.

After seven hours of talking on the bilingual school situation, a return was agreed to by Hon. R. A. Pyne in the Legislature last night for all correspondence and documents relating to the operation of regulation 17. The debate was precipitated by Mr. Z. Mageau (Sturgeon Falls,) who took advantage of the occasion to air his grievances of the French-Canadians. He was supported by Mr. Damase Racine (Russell), Mr. Napoleon Champagne (East Ottawa), Dr. Forbes Godfrey (West York), Mr. McCrae (Sudbury), Hon. J. O. Reaume and Mr. Rowell.

Dr. Pyne said: "The policy of the Government in regard to English-French schools in this Province is to carry out and give effect to the resolution unanimously adopted by this House on the 22nd of March, 1911. Regulation No. 17 is looked upon, in spite of hostility in some quarters, as fair and reasonable to all concerned, and the Government proposes to carry out the declared intention of this Legislature in regard to the use and efficient teaching of the English language in the public and separate schools of this Province.

The return was granted.

Protest of French-Canadians.

In support of his motion Mr. Mageau, the Liberal member for Sturgeon Falls, launched out on a lengthy expose of the conditions prevailing with regard to bilingualism in the schools of the Province. He remarked it was to be wondered how the people of Ontario could, through the offices of the present Government, indulge in curtailing in so many ways the individual liberty of a large section of the Province. In the other British colonies a different state of affairs existed. Instancing the case of South Africa. Mr. Mageau said he held in his hand the latest revised regulations of the Director of Education for the State of Transvaal. He found that all printed matters were done in both English and Dutch, not only in regard to education, but in every branch of the civil government of that colony. Further, as they all knew, the Dutch language was placed on an equal footing with the English language throughout South Africa.

He also pointed out that in the Province of Saskatchewan every school board was entitled to the same protection, and the Minister of Education has to endorse their debentures, no matter the race or creed of those who make the request. Compare that, said Mr. Mageau, with the borrowing powers of the Separate School Boards of the Province, where you can have your separate school debentures guaranteed by municipali-

ties entirely composed of separate school supporters. How did that suit the hon. acting Premier?

Inspectors' Requirements.

Damase Racine (Russell) supported Mr. Mageau's contention that the supervising inspectors of the English-French schools should have a proper knowledge of French and the Separate School Inspector be a Roman Catholic. The men appointed did not understand the language nor did they understand the children. Based on reports of men who were not competent to inspect these schools, the Provincial grants had been withheld. "This is an injustice; it is not fair," declared Mr. Racine. "This money belongs to the people of the Province; it should be paid to them for the purpose for which it was intended."

"Why was the money not paid?" asked Dr. Godfrey.

"Because the report of the Inspector said not," replied Mr. Racine. "How could you expect a favorable report from men who cannot speak the language and do not understand the children?"

"Was a proper Inspector available?" said Mr. C. N. Anderson (South Essex).

"Yes, I believe there was," declared Mr. Racine effectively.

Mr. Champagne's Plea.

Mr. Champagne (East Ottawa) in an eloquent, entertaining, and at times impassioned speech held the attention of the House for a lengthy period. He declared: "If you have the right to abolish French in Ontario, the Frenchmen have a right to abolish the English language in the Province of Quebec, but they will never do that." "We should have schools where the children of to-day and to-morrow will be educated in their own language."

Referring to the incidents of 1776 Mr. Champagne declared that the first blood shed in the defence of Canada after occupation by the British was French blood.

Offer to Mr. Rowell.

Mr. Champagne said he was not satisfied with the treatment they had received from the Government, and he had stated publicly if the leader of the Opposition was willing to give more he was willing to follow him. He wanted to be fair with the leader of the Opposition. "I want four years of French in our schools and after that two hours a day of French, and if the leader of the Opposition will agree to that I and my people will follow."

Varied Opinions.

Mr. McCrea (Sudbury) pleaded for the rule of a medium policy.

Dr. Forbes Godfrey (West York) declared that every French-Canadian should learn the English tongue, the majority language of the North American continent.

Mr. W. D. McPherson (West Toronto) insisted that the resolution of March, 1911, be adhered to.

Mr. Morel (Nipissing) pleaded for the grants for the French schools in the poorer sections.

Dr. Reaume and Grievances.

Hon. J. O. Reaume was not inclined to accord with the grievances that had been expressed by his compatriots. He took the position that the knowledge of the English language among the French-Canadians of the Province was better now than in his younger days. As a race they were eager to learn the English language, but did not yield to it in beauty, literature and choice of expression. For years the trouble had been brewing, but when it broke out "the grand old man who presides over the destinies of this Province, who in a matter of this kind moves slowly, but keeps on moving, took his time to have the matter looked into," and once he got what he wanted he took his stand. Regulation 17 was the result. That regulation was not perfect. It was in its infancy. "I think the education of the French-Canadian people has been well studied."

"What does your Bishop think?" asked Mr. Mageau.

"My honorable friend will excuse me if I do not drag the dogmas and