

# IF THE FRENCH PREVAIL FRENCH MAY BE TAUGHT

## Interpretations of Bilingual Regulations

### POINT RAISED IN HOUSE

**Mr. Ducharme Asks Government the  
Meaning of Word "Hitherto" —  
Scarcity of Competent Teachers for  
French-English Schools.**

When the House was in Committee of Supply in the Legislature late last night some interesting points emerged in a discussion of bilingualism. The intricacies of the subject were handled by Hon. G. Howard Ferguson, who was Acting Minister of Education during Dr. Pyne's absence in England.

With reference to clause 4 of regulation 17, which states that in schools where French hitherto has been the subject of study and provides conditions for instruction in French reading, grammar and composition, the word "hitherto" received some attention.

Mr. Ducharme (North Essex) said he would like to get an explanation of the word "hitherto" at it referred to the schools. "Supposing that tomorrow," he said, "in some sections of the county of Essex or other parts of Ontario where there would be say twenty-five French-speaking pupils and as many English-speaking pupils, and that were to be a new school, under the present law would it be legal to teach French in that school?"

Hon. Mr. Ferguson—Under section 15 it says where the French now prevails it may be taught, so the position my hon. friend describes would come within that regulation.

#### "Toleration" or Law?

Mr. Ducharme—I understand the Minister of Education to answer "where French prevails French may be taught." Does that word "may" mean tolerate or is it legal under the law?

Hon. Mr. Ferguson—It is certainly recognized by the regulations the right to have it taught. It is not a question of toleration.

Mr. Rowell (referring to the illustration used by Mr. Ducharme)—Suppose you have got an equal number of pupils in the school can it be said in that case the French language prevails so as to make it within regulation 15?

#### An Independent Official.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson—I have not the regulation, but I think it somewhat depends upon the report of the inspector. The idea of this regulation, I may say in a word, is this: that there must be some independent authority to decide these matters, and the department feels the best authority to decide whether regulations should apply and how they should be worked out and the elasticity given to the regulation would be in the hands of some official whose duty it is to see to that kind of thing, who is not biased in the matter at all, and has no reason for treating harshly anybody, and has at heart the educational interests of everybody. It is left to that official to decide how the school should be operated.

#### English to Prevail.

Continuing, Mr. Ferguson, dealing with the word "hitherto," said: "We assume that where a French com-

munity grows on to an English community in the Province of Ontario that the English language is the prevailing language. When French prevails they operate under regulation 15. They have the right; it is not a question of toleration. If it were possible to plant an entire French community somewhere isolated by itself, the word 'hitherto' would apply, and then it would be designated and come under regulation 17. The idea is that as rapidly as they can acquire it they can get a knowledge of English from the teacher, because they have not the opportunity in their surroundings and every day life. Where there is an entire French community the only way to learn the language is from the teachers, and we require them to devote so much a day to the knowledge of English."

Answering Mr. Rowell, Dr. Pyne said there were about ninety English-French schools unable to secure qualified teachers, because there were no teachers available.

## LIKE CATTLE IN CARS AND STILL NO RELIEF

### Toronto Citizens Not Helped by Legislature Committee

The city of Toronto's attempt to get better street railway service was frustrated by the Private Bills Committee of the Legislature yesterday. The city bill, which was dealt with by the committee, provided for the putting into service within three months of two hundred more cars. The bill also contained a clause providing for a forfeit of \$500 a day in the event of the company refusing to obey the act.

Mayor Church stated that the clause in the agreement under which the company was bound to give accommodation had become practically a dead letter. He blamed the Ontario Railway Board for allowing the company to do as it pleased in this matter. Last November the board had ordered the construction of fifty more cars, but as yet these cars had not been forthcoming, and the board had not compelled compliance with its order.

#### Treated Like Cattle.

The committee rejected the clause on a vote of ten to eight.

A clause providing for free ride for soldiers also caused some dispute, while Mayor Church referred to the overcrowding of street cars, stating that to say people were packed in like cattle was not properly expressing it. This clause of the bill will be further discussed in the House, when what remains of the bill will come up for second reading.

Another decision by the committee means that if Toronto sells water to the township of York and trouble develops the dispute will have to be settled before the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

The city's representatives favored private arbitration.