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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF

SIR WILFRED LAURIER

BY OSCAR DOUGLAS SKELTON

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BISHOP FALLON'S ADDRESS

(Continued from Page 1.)

possession of Great Britain. One of the first things I want to say is that there is a common mistake with regard to denominational schools. The majority of you are under the impression that Catholics started denominational schools in Canada, but that idea is far away from the mark. The first mention made of denominational schools in the history of British Canada is in a letter from a member of the British government to Governor Murray in 1763, just three years after Canada passed from possession of the French to the British.

Denominational Schools. "That is only a side remark, but it is the answer to saying that Catholics started denominational schools in Canada. Before 1841, when Lower and Upper Canada united in a larger nation, the various non-Catholic bodies in both made frequent appeals to the home government and to the governor of the colony for religious schools for their own denomination. In 1841, by the Act of Union, both, by process of legislation, became one political unit. At that time, people in Quebec were 90 per cent. Catholic, and the people of Ontario were nearly 90 per cent. non-Catholic.

The Protestants of Quebec were not satisfied to leave their educational interests to their Catholic fellow-citizens in that province. I don't blame them. Education is so sacred that I don't think it is a wise thing for any minority, if it can help it, to entrust its educational rights and future to a majority that is of another religious faith or persuasion, and I am the last man to utter anything against the action of the Protestants of Quebec in 1841, the dissentient Protestant minority of Her Majesty in 1841, as it was called, claimed the right to protect themselves against the Catholic majority, well, I say, that speaking in the name of my own people in Ontario, 'yes, give the Protestants of Quebec the fullest guarantees not give us the same,' and that the basis upon which all subsequent common school legislation in the two provinces of Quebec and Ontario should be, that the rights of the Queen's Protestant subjects in 1841 in the province of Quebec should be the limit, and the standard and the measure of rights of the Queen's Roman Catholic subjects in the province of Ontario.

Separate School Act. "In 1863, a Separate School Act was passed, for the Catholics of the province of Ontario, which, on the declaration of the leading statesmen of the day and of the superintendent of education was to give to the Roman Catholics of Ontario precisely the same privileges and rights in education as were in the possession of the Protestant minority in Quebec, and the Hon. Egerton Ryerson, then superintendent of public school education, declared in a letter to Sir John Macdonald that he had gone carefully through the act of 1863, comparing it with the document that gave educational privileges to the Protestant minority in Quebec and declared that the act of 1863 gave to the Roman Catholics of Ontario the same things as the preceding legislation had given to the Protestants of Quebec. And that is all that we are asking. If any body should ask you, 'what do you want?' All that we ask is the same honorable straightforward treatment in education for the Roman Catholic minority in Ontario as is given to the Protestant minority in Quebec. That is all, but that is a great deal. But I would be ashamed of having been born and educated in Ontario and of having lived for four-fifths of my life here if I had to believe that the Roman Catholics of Quebec would deal more honorably and generously in a matter of such supreme importance than the Protestants of my own native province. If I believed that, I would be ashamed.

Question of Rights. "I am perfectly honest when I say that if we can only reach with our case the ears of our non-Catholic fellow-citizens in this province, the vast majority will say: 'you must have the full rights guaranteed to you under the Constitution.' Now, what were these rights? There would have been no Canada in 1867 or subsequently, if there had not been a mutual agreement about the educational rights of religious minorities. The province of Quebec would not

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have gone into the Confederation until the rights of Roman Catholics in the rest of the dominion were protected and the province of Ontario would not have gone into Confederation unless the rights of Protestants were recognized in the same way, and that was the atmosphere which surrounded the Fathers of Confederation wherever they met which resulted in the British North America Act of 1867.

Was Incorporated. "It was made clear and plain throughout their conference and was incorporated in the Act itself, which contained one section, No. 93, dealing with education. In the preface of that section and in the four clauses which constitute it, one thing is made clear: the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec and the Catholic minority in the province of Ontario should be on a footing of equality and their educational rights are guaranteed by that document, the constitution of this country. What did the British North America Act give us? It gave us a complete common school system, by which I mean a school system that takes the child from the alphabet to the university, or, gives him his qualification as a school teacher in the province. That was the common school system from 1863 to 1867, and from 1867 to 1871. The constitution gave us a complete common school system, but it gave us no university rights. It gave us what we had by law at the time of the passing of the Act of 1867, and by law we have a common school system, and both before and after Confederation until 1915 we did in our schools the work that embraces the curriculum of the common school system.

Prepared Teachers. "We prepared our teachers, gave them their teaching certificates and there was really neither let nor hindrance in the broad sense of the development of our common school system until 1915, six years ago, when the superintendent of education and the Educational Department put out orders to the Catholic people that they were not to do a certain class of educational work in the common school system. "Specifically, what is the case today? It is this: There was this startling difference in the common school system of ours, (for, mind you, there were two common school systems established by the Act of Confederation; there was the public common school system from alphabet to entrance of university and the separate common school system from alphabet to entrance to university). The difference is this: While the province of Ontario has power to legislate concerning the public common school system, it had no power to legislate in any way that would interfere detrimentally with the separate school system. That is a fact. It is beyond the power of the province of Ontario to legislate in any harmful way against the separate common school system. It is inhibited from so doing by the constitution of Canada in provincial parliaments, which says that only the Imperial Parliament could interfere with the separate common school system.

Cut System in Two. "In 1871, four years after Confederation, acting quite within its rights, the provincial parliament introduced a bill which cut the public common school system in two, and said the public schools hereafter will contain the grades from the first to the fourth book, and from the

fourth to the entrance to university would be called high schools. This, which brought considerable advantage to the public common school system had absolutely no bearing upon the separate common school system and could not have any bearing upon it. Constitutionally, it was meant that the Act of 1871 should have no bearing whatsoever, should limit in no sense the separate common school system and in fact when John Sandfield McDonald, at that time Prime Minister of this Province, introduced this Act, Hon. Edward Blake, then a member, asked: 'what about our Roman Catholic friends?' John Sandfield McDonald answered: 'when our Roman Catholic friends want this division of their common school system, when they want High Schools all they have to do is to ask for them, and I have

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Funeral of an Old Resident. The funeral of the late John Cockburn took place from his family residence, 32 York street, to Cataragui cemetery, on Wednesday afternoon, the service being conducted by Dean Starr. The pallbearers were his sons, Ernest and Albert, his nephews, W. Cockburn, Sr., W. Cockburn, Jr., and W. McCullough and W. Derry. The late Mr. Cockburn was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1830, coming to Canada in 1844. After residing in Montreal for several years he came to Kingston, and with the exception of a few years he carried on business as a cooper, tinsmith, etc., retiring about fifteen years ago. In his younger days he was well known in yachting circles of Lake Ontario and always retained a keen interest in this particular sport. He retained remarkable good health until a few years previous to his death when he was suddenly taken ill. In religion he was

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an Anglican, a member of St. George's Cathedral.

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The cable to the Toronto Star says the resignation of de Valera will likely be the result of the Sinn Fein split.

The Japanese cabinet called to meet Saturday to take final action regarding the naval ratio question.

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