

It would be unfortunate if French-Canadian agitators should take advantage of a crisis in the fortunes of the Empire to extort special privileges from Governments in Canada. The events at Ottawa, however, are ominous of the spirit which possesses an element of the French-Canadian people. Is it with the deliberate design to prevent recruiting that these agitators seek to organize the French-speaking people into a solid political mass and to create the impression that French-Canadians suffer injustice in Ontario equal to any injustice suffered by Poles under German authority or by French in Alsace and Lorraine?

Almost continuously since Confederation French-Canadians have held the balance of political power in Canada. They have suffered no injustice at the hands of either political party. This newspaper has no desire to "make a case" against Quebec. It cannot, however, see any reason why the French of Quebec should respond less freely to recruiting appeals than Canadians in Ontario or in any other Province. It thinks it legitimate, indeed necessary, to make the appeal for enlistment to all the Provinces, and where there is neglect or slackness it cannot be wrong to emphasize the fact.

All of us want to think well of French-Canadians. We would much rather speak well than ill of them. None of us has been slow to recognize the valor of those French-Canadians who have gone to the front. No one suggests that they are inferior to other troops from the Dominions. The French of Quebec are bound by a double loyalty to the Old World. The political leaders of Quebec have continually professed their devotion to Old France, just as they have told us so often that the last gun in defence of British connection on this Continent would be fired by a French-Canadian. There will be less danger of anyone firing the last gun if the French of Quebec will do as well in this tremendous time as the people of the other Provinces of Canada. If they fail their position in the Confederation will be less influential than it has been and many years must elapse before their neglect in the supreme crisis of the British Empire will be forgotten. Anyone who has regard and respect for French-Canadians will hope that when the war is over they will not be fairly subject to reproach by any other element in Canada.

The Daily News does not attack the institutions or the language of French-Canadians. It has always insisted that every right guaranteed to the French minority at Confederation should be scrupulously maintained and respected. It would not deprive the French people of any constitutional right or privilege which they now enjoy. It agrees that they have equal citizenship in Canada and it would fight just as strongly for a French-Canadian as for an English-Canadian if any attempt were made to reduce him to an inferior status in the Dominion.

But The Daily News is just as strongly opposed to granting new privileges to any group or section. As we read the Constitution, the French language is guaranteed in the Province of Quebec, in Parliament, in the Federal Courts and in Federal Documents. There is no serious suggestion that these rights should be cancelled or modified. If there is any agitation of that character we are not a party to it, nor do we sympathize with it. But we do not believe that dual language should be officially extended in Canada. Over all the Western country we would have one official language. To our mind it is in the interest of all elements of the population, since we are an English-speaking Continent, that they should be able to speak the language of the Continent and should have equal opportunity in all occupations and pursuits, in all civic relations, and in all public positions. To the Constitution, as we understand it, we adhere. To evasion of the Constitution by political agitation and political concession we are opposed. Of course we are not so foolish as to suggest legislation that would compel French people to speak English.

In the United States the South had a long ascendancy at Washington. When this ascendancy began to decline the Southern leaders sought to impose their special institutions upon the new territories. Failing in this they brought on Civil War. They fought, not to retain old rights under the Constitution, but to secure new

privileges to which they were not entitled under the Constitution. We have no apprehension that we will have civil war in Canada. We are willing to abide by the course of events, by the judgment of the constituencies from time to time. We do not pretend to know what the future may have in store for the French or English in Canada. But, as has been said, we are opposed to the creation of new sectional or racial rights and privileges and this position does not necessarily involve attack upon any race or creed. These views, we believe, command the general sympathy and support of the Canadian people and should prevail in the government of the country.