

THE NORTHWEST QUESTION

(From the Toronto Mail)

A correspondent of The Calgary Herald says that in common with the rest of the English speaking settlers he advocates the abolition of the official use of the French language for these reasons:

"I favor the abolition of French as an official language because the language is unnecessary; because it is expensive; because it was never wanted; because its existence attaches a stigma to the value of English as a language sufficient for all the purposes of our Dominion; because its use will tend to prevent the consolidation and complete amalgamation of all peoples in one common country; because it is the language of several Canadian rebellions; because it is an element of disintegration where every patriotic sentiment calls for unity and the strength which unity gives; because the Territories must be consecrated in their infancy to those high purposes which their virgin soil, their vast areas, their free air, and bracing climate, and limitless natural resources are so well fitted to work out. We have here in the Northwest God-given opportunities of establishing the foundations of a nation which shall be freer from party shackles, freer from ecclesiastical intolerance, freer from capitalistic servitude, freer from social tyranny, than any other country in the world. Let us see to it that we make no mistake in laying the foundation stones, that we build well for the future, and that in this blessed free air, untainted as yet with the foul emanations which have poisoned the atmosphere of other and older regions, we foster no race distinctions, establish no ecclesiastical superiority, and institute no partisan shibboleths."

Allowing for exaggerated language here and there, this appears to be a sincere and conclusive argument against the Dual system. Our French friends tells us that dualism has not worked badly in several European countries. They cannot, and speak the truth, maintain that it has worked well. It is not necessary, however, to go to the Old World for information. We in Canada have had a large experience of the system. In the main our history is a record of the collisions and conflicts resulting from it. If we had made fair progress assuredly it has not been because of dualism, but in spite of it. We have been obliged to devote a vast amount of energy, which, under happier auspices, could have been put to better use, to the discussion of burning questions,

arising out of race antipathies, and out of the attempt to adapt the life of the community to the rusty machinery of theocratic rule. Yet the final solution is as far off as ever, for in order to keep the discordant elements from flying asunder we have had to resort to a series of compromises which have not disposed of the difficulties involved, but merely put off their settlement to another day. In fact, the race question with all that it implies, is a more formidable and menacing problem at the present time than ever before.

Source: *Calgary Daily Herald* (February 24, 1890) p. 1.