

BILINGUAL CONTROVERSY IN ONTARIO

city of Quebec, was completed in September, 1916, with the exception of the placing of the central span. This span, having a length of 640 feet and a weight of 5,100 tons had been built on scows and taken up to the bridge to be hoisted into position. On September 11, 1916, when in the presence of a large gathering of people the span had been hoisted about twenty feet, a supporting shoe, used in the hoisting but not forming any part of the bridge, broke, owing to a defective casting, and the whole span fell into the river. This accident, which unhappily entailed the loss of the lives of twelve workmen, is the second that has occurred in the course of this work, the steel superstructure of the southern cantilever and anchor arms of the bridge having collapsed on August 29, 1907, when 60 lives were lost and eleven persons were injured¹. The construction work of a new span was begun immediately, and the work of hoisting this into place, started on September 17, was successfully accomplished on September 20, 1917, thus completing the structure of the bridge.

Bilingual Controversy in Ontario.—During recent years an educational controversy has turned upon the rights of the French-speaking population of Ontario to the use of the French language in the public schools. On August 17, 1913, the Ontario Department of Education issued a "Circular of Instructions No. 17," providing that in what are known as English-French schools in Ontario the French language as a medium of instruction should not be used beyond Form I, except, on approval of the chief inspector, for pupils who were unable to speak or understand English. It was claimed by the opponents of the Circular that the rights of the French-speaking inhabitants under the British North America Act, 1867, were thereby infringed, and after legal decisions of the Canadian courts had been given against them, they carried an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England. Judgment was pronounced by Lord Chancellor Buckmaster on November 2, 1916, which dismissed the appeal and upheld the legal validity of the "Instructions" issued by the Ontario Education Department. Another appeal at the same time, contending that an Act of the Ontario Legislature (5, Geo. V., Ch. 3) providing for the appointment of a commission to conduct the English-French schools of the city of Ottawa instead of the elected board of trustees was illegal, was allowed, and the Act was pronounced *ultra vires*.

Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1916.—The quinquennial census of population and agriculture was taken for the three Prairie Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, for the date of June 1, 1916. The detailed results already available are included in other parts of this volume (see pages 95 to 105). The total population of the three provinces was returned as 1,698,220, as compared with 1,328,725² in 1911.

Dominions Royal Commission.—On September 2, 1916, the Dominions Royal Commission returned to Canada to complete the labours which, as noted in the Canada Year Book of 1914 (page 680), were suspended on the outbreak of the war. The members of the Com-

¹See Canada Year Book 1907, pp. xxxiv-xxxv. ²Including 6,016, the population of the new territory added to Manitoba by the Manitoba Boundaries Extension Act 1912.