

I do not know whether I can get an honourable member with sufficient nerve to second this amendment.

The Hon. the SPEAKER: Under the rules the first amendment, that of Right Hon. Senator Meighen, must be disposed of before the honourable member from Toronto may move his amendment.

Hon. G. LACASSE: Honourable members, I do not intend to follow closely my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Hocken) who has just taken his seat. He covered much more ground than I care to cover. But I should hesitate to accept his interpretation of the Constitution. I gather from his remarks that to suit him, and maybe a certain group with which he is in sympathy, all French-speaking Canadians should be gagged and bound and thrown into the sea. It would seem that Nature has shown a disposition to accommodate them by placing an ocean on each side of Canada!

There is no constitutional issue at stake in this case. It has been admitted elsewhere, and it is admitted here, that it is a question of choosing the best method of applying a principle accepted by all. I enjoyed the speech by the right honourable leader of the House much more—may I say it candidly?—than that just delivered. The right honourable gentleman's speech showed a broad vision of what should be considered the proper Canadian outlook. I noticed his allusion to past political events in which he was a very important actor, and the heat and emotion with which he said he hoped in the future no one would again point a finger at him and accuse him of being antagonistic to French Canadians.

I am confident his expression of feeling was inspired by a sincere conviction that we must all work for national unity. But I regret that my right honourable friend to-day let pass a unique opportunity to redeem himself in the eyes of those who were accusing him yesterday.

Several honourable members have referred to the attitude adopted by a former leader of the Liberal party, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I would remind the House that times have changed, and there are to-day in Quebec and outside—for I may inform my honourable friend from Toronto that Quebec is considered as an Indian Reserve only by narrow-minded people—almost a million loyal French-speaking Canadian citizens. Even in Toronto there are a good many, but as yet they have been unable to influence my honourable friend and his friends.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: There never was a French-speaking mayor of Toronto?

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: No. It may be true that Montreal has not elected an English-speaking mayor for several years, but it is equally true that two English-speaking men important in the political history of this country, namely, Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Stewart, who were once left without a seat in Ontario and in Alberta respectively, were generously accommodated in Rimouski and Argenteuil by French-speaking electors. On one occasion I proposed to a friend of mine in Toronto, belonging to another party, that his city might well repeat that generous gesture in favour of prominent French-speaking Tories repeatedly defeated in Quebec, but he doubted very much whether it was possible.

No public man can ignore the fact that to-day there is a very strong feeling among French-speaking Canadians, a feeling which nothing can stop, against real or apparent encroachments upon their rights and privileges which have been—to use an expression fallen from the lips of my honourable friend from Grandville (Hon. Mr. Chapais)—consecrated by natural right and historical tradition. Some people in Toronto may believe that the supreme triumph of the British cause was the hanging of the patriots of 1837. That apparently, in their minds, is where political history begins in the new world. Well, it may be necessary to remind them once in a while that the history of Canada goes back to its discovery by Jacques Cartier—which event will be solemnly commemorated this year in Quebec and throughout Canada. As I say, there is a strong feeling amongst all French-speaking Canadians against any encroachment on their rights and privileges, so much so that a few days ago four members of another House took the decisive step of seceding from their party when this Bill was under discussion there. They took that definite course because they know they are responsible to the electors, who before long will be called upon to renew their confidence in them, and because they are fully aware of the strong sentiment obtaining in their respective constituencies in this regard.

We have been told indirectly by the right honourable leader of this House that this opposition to the Bill is a political move. The word "political" was not used by him, and again I admire the right honourable gentleman's ability to express his mind without unduly antagonizing his listeners. This adroitness is not due to fear, for I recognize him as one of the most fearless of our political leaders. In spite of strong denials, however, I believe that my honourable friends opposite will show in a moment or two, by their unanimous voting, who are the real