

Gracious Majesty King George the Third, since by the fortune of war we have been subject to his rule, the recent favours which he has just shown us in granting us the use of our own laws and the free exercise of our religion, and in allowing us to share in all the privileges and advantages of British subjects, should assuredly suffice to excite your gratitude and your zeal to sustain the interests of the Crown of Great Britain.

I may say to my hon. friend that Monseigneur Briand was a humble priest. He had seen this country passing from the French régime to the British régime, and he was full of the traditions of the past, but he had learned to appreciate what it meant for French Canadians to live under British institutions. He was not a sycophant or a jingo. He was a Canadian. He was not looking for honours or favour, for titles or knighthood, but he was simply voicing the sentiments of his people and expressing their gratitude to the British Crown. My hon. friend says we owe nothing to the British Crown, that we have wrested from Britain what privileges we possess. This is not exactly the language used by another distinguished prelate in the long line of French Canadian bishops. What did the Rev. Joseph Octave Plessis, afterwards bishop, and recognized as such by the British sovereign say? Sir, remember that in those days there were Catholic disabilities in England, but as far as Quebec was concerned those disabilities were wiped out by the British Crown, and the Roman Catholic church of Canada became practically an established church. What did this Catholic bishop of Quebec say? This is the language he used:

Our conquerors were looked upon with jealousy and suspicion, and inspired only apprehension. People could not persuade themselves that strangers to our soil, to our language, our laws and usages, and our worship, would ever be capable of restoring to Canada what it had lost by a change of masters. Generous nation, which has strongly demonstrated how unfounded were those prejudices; industrious nation, which contributed to the development of those sources of wealth which existed in the bosom of the country; exemplary nation, which in times of troubles teaches to the world in what consists that liberty to which all men aspire and among whom so few know its just limits; kind-hearted nation, which has received with so much humanity, the most faithful subjects most cruelly driven from that kingdom to which we formerly belonged; beneficent nation, which every day gives to Canada new proofs of liberality. No, no, you are not our enemies, nor of our properties which are protected by your laws, nor of our holy religion which you respect.

Sir, let me quote again what Monseigneur Plessis said on September 16, 1907. Speaking to the French Catholics of Quebec he said:

Mr. LEMIEUX.

You have understood that your interests were not apart from those of Great Britain.

Thus he was speaking against the policy of isolation propounded by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk), and by Mr. Bourassa. He continued:

You are convinced, as we are, that it is impossible to be a good Christian without being a loyal and faithful subject; that you would be unworthy the name of Catholics and Canadians, if, forgetting the rules of your holy religion and the examples of your ancestors, you should show disloyalty or even indifference when it is a question of doing your duty as subjects devoted to the interests of your sovereign and the defence of your country. You have not waited until this province should be menaced by an imminent invasion, or even until war was declared to give proofs of your zeal and of your good-will for the public service.

This language applies as much against the reliance on the Monroe doctrine as against the splendid isolation preached by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier. Sir, what benefit could French Canadians expect from annexation with the United States or from isolation in this confederation of ours? What would become of our language, our laws, our schools? As I said a moment ago, remember Louisiana! I repeat it again, my hon. friend does not represent the national aspirations of the province of Quebec in this matter. He does not even represent the French Conservative traditions. Sir George Cartier, whose name he mentioned, was the man who introduced in parliament the Militia Act of 1862. The Bill brought about the defeat of the government. What did Sir George say:

But I must at the same time confess that the question upon which we fell—the motion of Tuesday last (20th May, 1862) was a severe blow to us; in fact, it defeated us as responsible advisers to His Excellency. If, however, that blow had been aimed against us only, we should not have expressed regret, but I cannot help saying I apprehend—I sincerely apprehend—that vote will be hereafter invoked by those—and they are numerous who are hostile to the institutions of Lower Canada, and particularly to the French Canadians. But I hope that the noble conduct of our clergy, and the manifestation of the population of Lower Canada last fall, will mitigate any aspersion unprincipled men may be disposed to cast upon us.

In 1867, what did Sir Geo. Cartier do? In order to impress his fellow countrymen with the necessity of joining hands with the English-speaking Canadians, he demanded from his colleague, Sir John Macdonald, the portfolio of Militia. Why? Because he knew he could make that military policy popular with his own countrymen when they came to understand it. He