

THE BILINGUAL QUESTION—*Con.*

this shall continue to be a British country, or, as the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Boivin) has said a German colony, 3812. My hon. friend has referred to a precedent that would indicate that possibly this Parliament in days gone by had interfered with the free exercise of power by the provinces. I was surprised, I was astounded, when the hon. member for Lambton (Mr. Pardee) so dared in this free Parliament to inaccurately discuss what took place in it in 1872, 3813-15. It is new doctrine to me that in this twentieth century and in this British country disregard of constituted authority, marchings upon the street, the flying of banners, the defiance of law, shall form the basis of action by the Parliament of Canada? 3816. Then it gets down to this, that the Legislature of the province of Ontario, and that Legislature alone, has the right to decide and determine what time shall be allotted to the teaching of French, and what time shall be allotted to the teaching of English; and, if that be so which is admitted in the terms of this resolution itself, as explained by the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil), with the applause of the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) what right has this resolution in this Parliament, 3817. Summarizes his position, 3818-19.

*Boivin, G. H. (Shefford)*—3808.

I consider that this is the most important question that has been submitted to this House of Commons since the declaration of war, with the exception of the voting of the money and the aid required by the Mother Country, 3808. Mr. Ferguson quoted as to law, 3809-10. I merely wish to say that it is a pleasure for me to support this resolution, because, while the vote given upon it to-night, may be an adverse vote, I feel it will have a moral effect, 3811.

*Borden, Sir Robert (Prime Minister)*—3690.

This motion is addressed to Parliament rather than to the Government: it does not call for any governmental action. Nevertheless, I conceive it my duty, holding the position of leader of the Government, to make my attitude clear in regard to the motion, and I cannot see my way for one moment to support it, 3690. If we really propose to give advice to the Legislature of Ontario, if a resolution for that purpose could properly be introduced in this Parliament, would it not be reasonable in the first instance to refer the matter to a committee of the House for the purpose of inquiry and report?, 3690. No one of my fellow-citizens of the province of Quebec could be animated with a more intense determination to uphold the rights of the French language in this country, as they are fixed by the Constitutional Act, than I would be if any attempt were made to assail those rights, 3692. Edward Blake and Sir Wilfrid Laurier

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quoted on disallowance of educational legislation, 3692-3. Another remarkable feature about the resolution is that it omits any reference to the province of Manitoba. I would assume from this very significant omission that the situation in Manitoba, so far as this question is concerned, must be entirely satisfactory to my hon. friend from Kamouraska, 3694. As long as these various legislative bodies are supreme within their own sphere, no good purpose can ever be attained by having any of them cast reflections upon the legislation or policy of the other. Let each keep within its own jurisdiction; let each deal with the matters that are confided to it by the constitution, 3695. Surely it is not suggested by my right hon. friend that the Parliament of Canada, without any consultation with the provinces, against the consent of the provinces, can pass or ought to pass an address to His Majesty for the purpose of so amending the British North America Act that the rights of the provinces of Canada shall be cut down and limited, 3696. Therefore, when a suggestion such as that is made, pointing unmistakably to action by this Parliament along that line, I say it is unfortunate, and particularly unfortunate from the standpoint of the province of Quebec, 3697.

*Casgrain, Hon. T. Chase (Postmaster General)*—3709.

After the most mature deliberation, after having examined the situation, after having studied the resolution now before the House, and considered whether or not under the present circumstances it can be of any profit, advantage, or benefit to the minority of Ontario or in Canada, I have come to the conclusion for the reasons which I am about to give that I cannot support the resolution, 3709-10. My hon. friends have alluded to the history of this country, and, as the opportunity offers, it may be profitable that I should refer briefly to the historical aspect of the question, 3711-13. My humble opinion is that this resolution is not only absolutely useless, but harmful. It is fraught with great danger to the other provinces, and especially to the province of Quebec, 3713. The fact that we have not been blamed, that no member of this House has dared to rise and condemn the Government for not disallowing the Act of the Ontario Legislature is not only a vindication of the position we have taken, but a condemnation of those who have gone around in the province of Quebec and in the province of Ontario gathering those signatures to a petition, the prayer of which finds no supporters amongst the 221 members of this House, 3714. The principles upon which Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir John Thompson, and the Conservative party acted in those days in respect to an Act passed by the Legislature of Quebec are the principles upon which this Government stands to-day, 3715.