

This is a matter of opinion as to the time of making the gift, not as to the gift itself. The giving to England of this money in the form of supplies free of charge is something that should appeal to everyone in this honourable Chamber. I am one of those who think that we owe England more than money when we weigh what we have received from her. I refer to our British institutions and to the liberties we have been, and are, enjoying under the British flag. It seems to me necessary at this time to bring back to the memory of our people some historical truths easily forgotten in the turmoil of present controversies.

Although we have been at war for nearly three years, and have witnessed the terrible fate of nations wanting peace and peace only, still some of our people are saying that this is England's war and that it is none of our business. I always hear that with sorrow and pity: with sorrow, because it proves the ignorance of these people; with pity, because they are to be forgiven as not knowing any better. And this ignorance is not their fault. Their education is not of their making: it is given to them and it is faulty.

Over a year ago, while addressing members of a Montreal club and referring to some proposed educational reforms in the province of Quebec then being discussed, I said:

Should we not remember there is not a country in the world enjoying a measure of liberty greater than that which we enjoy in this province of Quebec? It seems to me the truth might well be inculcated that it is only under the British regime that conquered peoples may not only aspire to liberty, but become sister nations of their conquerors. We who are descended from one heroic race could without hesitation proclaim ourselves proud to be the partners of another race which in these terrible days gives an example of heroism comparable to anything known in history.

Are we really appreciating the full value of the liberties enjoyed under our British institutions? In order to give more weight to my argument, allow me to refer to an address delivered sixty-five years ago by a man destined to become one of the greatest Prime Ministers of this country. I refer to Wilfrid Laurier. His address attracted considerable attention at the time, but I think the excerpts I am about to read apply with even greater force to-day. The address is entitled, "Libéralisme Politique," and was delivered on the 26th of June, 1877, in the city of Quebec. The present translation in English is my own. No doubt it could be improved, but it is essentially correct.

Laurier stated at page 11:

Effectually, we French Canadians are a conquered race. It is a truth sad to state, but, after all, it is the truth.

With respect, but very firmly, I disagree with that statement; I think it is not correct. It is true that our country was conquered, but we as a race were not conquered. By the Treaty of Paris of 1763 this country ceased to be French; it became English, later British, and to-day it is the Dominion of Canada, one of the links of the British Commonwealth of Nations. That we became English and later British subjects was possible only under British institutions and under the British flag. But as a race we did not change. We were given the right and the means to remain of the French race, enjoying our faith, our language, our laws. We have been free to continue our traditions, to develop our culture, to educate our children as before. Though of the French race, we were English subjects, and happy so to remain; so much so, in fact, that we resisted the cajoleries of French envoys who in 1776 wanted us to join the English colonies then rebelling against England. Then we fought to keep the English flag flying over Canada, and, as you all know, we did so again in 1812. Our loyalty was evoked by our freedom under British institutions—by the enlightened British system of ruling vanquished countries.

And if in the intervening years we have not changed as a race, is it to be deplored? We have only to remember the visit of Their Majesties, the entreaties of the King and the Queen for us to remain what we are, to continue our French traditions, to develop our own culture.

In the present war, with unfortunate France prostrate under the German heel, did not our Governor General and our Prime Minister appeal to us to save French culture and French traditions, to remain the last post of French civilization?

Laurier continued:

But if we are a conquered race, we also have made a conquest: the conquest of liberty. We are a free people; we are a minority, but all our rights, all our privileges are preserved to us. And what is the source of that liberty? It is the constitution which has been conquered for us by our fathers and which we are enjoying to-day. . . . We have no more rights, no more privileges, but we have as many rights, as many privileges as have the other populations which compose the Canadian family.

And here in Laurier's view is the reason for our inability to grasp the real meaning of British institutions. What he said was true then and it is true to-day.

Our French education naturally trains us to study the history of modern liberty, not in the classical land of liberty, not in the history of England, but among the peoples of the European continent, the peoples of the same origin and