

Mr. SPROULE. Are the people of Alsace and Lorraine less loyal to the German empire because the Germans insist upon the language of the empire being spoken?

Mr. BOURASSA. I am very glad the hon. gentleman has brought that point to my attention. If my hon. friend knew the conditions which prevail in that country, he would know that there are two races, the Alsations and the people of Lorraine, that the Alsations are German by birth, education and language. Under the French government all their schools were German. The official language, as far as municipal documents were concerned, was German. After the war of 1870 the German language was imposed upon this province by law. What was the result? The Alsation people started to speak French in protest against that legislation, and if the hon. gentleman will refer to the latest studies that have been published, not upon the official administration of Alsace and Lorraine, but upon the true sentiments of the people, he will find that up to a few years ago, Alsations, who spoke good German and who hardly could speak French, when they met a German official spoke to him in broken French rather than have it said that they were a conquered race. But within three or four years the Emperor of Germany has changed his mind upon that question, as he has changed it upon many other questions. The Emperor of Germany, frightened at the increasing development of socialism, is endeavouring to bring to the support of his empire all the conservative elements within it. Laws of exclusion against the Catholics have been repealed. A more liberal method of government has been introduced into Alsace and Lorraine, and within the last few years the sentiments of the Alsations have changed more rapidly than for the previous thirty years.

But, my point is this, and perhaps I have passed over it in the heat of argument: Coming back to the figures which my hon. friend the Solicitor General quoted to-day, let me say that you have in the Northwest Territories at the present time more people who are neither English nor French than there are who are either English or French. Cannot the government and the members of this House, and especially the members of the opposition, forget for the moment party considerations and even, I may say, racial considerations, and realize that in the future of this land, in thirty or forty years probably, three-quarters of the people in the Northwest will be neither French nor English? If so, this is the proper time to implant into the new and coming race the spirit of our constitution, so that French Canadians will go there and help you in maintaining the Canadian character of that country. If before 1867 there were English-speaking provinces and there was one French province in British North America,

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since 1867 you have only eight Canadian provinces. To take an example from the figures that were quoted this afternoon, you have two elements in this country; you have the racial composition and you have the national composition. It may be that in one province it is more English and that in another it is more French; but all provinces are more Canadian than before. I say that if we want this country to last, if we do not want these western provinces to become the destroyers of confederation, if we do not want, within fifty or a hundred years, the thousands and millions of men who have no attachment to our traditions, who know nothing of our history and development, whose sentiments are largely attached to themselves and to the present, to take control of that country, we must take hold of it ourselves. If we do not implant in western Canada the traditions which have been so fruitful in bringing about the development of eastern Canada where we French Canadians unite with our English-speaking compatriots and share their attachment to our country, the time will come when that western country will not be English or French, and Canada itself will be no more Canadian. If there were no other ground than that, I say that it would be the duty of this parliament to make that country an Anglo-French country.

I am not going to enter into a discussion of the effect of this amendment or of the effect of Sir John Thompson's amendment, but I simply say this is the time to make the constitution of those provinces. It was the opinion of the framers of the Northwest Territories Act in 1877 that their Act was not complete without putting in the dual language clause. They did it. In 1890, they removed a part of that article and allowed the rest to remain there. My hon. friend the leader of the government has stated that the only reason why the preservation of the French language in the courts was agreed to in 1890 was because the courts were federal courts, but that if they had been provincial courts probably the same fate would have been meted out to the French language as far as the courts are concerned as that which befel it as far as the legislative assembly was concerned. That is not the only reason given by Sir John Thompson; here is another reason given by him which will last long after this Bill has become law. Referring to the abolition of the language in the courts, he said:

If that provision be obligatory we may have the misfortune of seeing men brought to the bar of justice in our own courts, tried before our own judges, convicted, condemned and sentenced in a language not one word of which they understand, and unable to offer a plea for justice or for mercy.

That is a reason which will last long after the adoption of this Bill. A telegram has come from Mr. Justice Pendergast say-