

conditions, no reservations. We are absolute masters in this Dominion of Canada in all our domestic and in all our external affairs. I ask my right hon. friend the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) whether they fully considered the extent to which this declaration might ultimately lead us. This confederation was founded upon compromise. We have now absolute control in every domestic and external matter. Can we change the basis of confederation? Can we change the compromise upon which this confederation was founded? This country is largely made up, Mr. Speaker, of two distinct races; the two great races as recognized are the English-speaking Canadians and the French-speaking Canadians. Will a day ever come in this parliament when a government will say: We propose to abrogate some of the special features in our constitution which have been maintained ever since confederation? I submit that within the scope of the positive declarations a Canadian government might have absolute power to do so. I ask my right hon. friend the Prime Minister, if he has not already done so, to go to French Canada at the earliest opportunity and consult the leading members of the French bar in regard to the opinion which I now offer. My opinion may be wrong. My hope is that it may be wrong. My fear is that it may be right. I am going to put a case, and in order to make it impressive and expressive, let me put a very extreme case. Some time in the future some government in this country may arise and propose to abolish bilingualism in this parliament—a matter of purely domestic concern, with no external application whatever. We are the masters of our own destiny, according to document, and no power can interfere with us; we are subject to no compulsion. The British government cannot interfere. If they tried to do so we would say: No interference; the declaration affirms that we are not subordinate to you, so hands off Canada. Such might be our reply to Great Britain. Mr. Speaker, I have many times in this chamber admired the stand which you have taken upon Canadian constitutional questions. I have heard you argue with rare force and ability in favour of the rights of minorities. I have heard you demonstrate in this chamber that the great bulwark upon which you and your compatriots rest their rights and their security was to be found, if not in this parliament, in the British parliament and at the foot of the throne. Are these rights now to be jeopardized? Do you, Mr. Speaker, realize the language we

have before us here? Do you realize that if a government should arise in Canada at some time in the future and in its madness or in its rashness, should propose to abolish our provincial legislatures, and adopt a system of legislative union—do you realize that under the language of this declaration they might possibly do so? It would be a matter pertaining purely to the domestic affairs of the Dominion of Canada. I submit that under the definite terms of this declaration a government, if so minded, might abolish every provincial legislature in the Dominion of Canada, and nobody could rebuke it; nobody could interfere with it; no compulsion could be employed to stop it.

I have heard it suggested, that the British government would veto such an act. Look at another clause in the report. The power of disallowance has now been done away with. The right to disallow a bill of the Canadian parliament has been in the statutes since confederation. It has only been exercised once, and that over half a century ago, but the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice have brought back a report containing a clause providing that the right of disallowance no longer exists.

Now what is the situation? I submit that it is the most serious situation that has ever been laid before the parliament of Canada since confederation; it may have the effect of sweeping away those safeguards which the fathers of confederation placed in our constitutional act in 1867. I would not allow any part of the Dominion of Canada or any section of this Dominion to be exposed to attacks in these respects in the future. I would not allow the present protection to be taken away from minorities, as it might be taken away if this report were adopted in its present form by this House. Why was there not some limitation or reservation in regard to Canada?

I have turned this matter over in my mind many times since Saturday night, when I first read the report. I have thought it out as best I could. I thought it might be argued that if Canada should hereafter attempt to pass such an act as I have described by way of illustration, the British government might in some way interfere. Well, it might be possible to do serious mischief without an act. If we did it by resolution or by motion in this House no one could interfere and if we proceeded by act of parliament I doubt if there could be any interference. But suppose Great Britain should interfere, suppose Great Britain maintain it can interfere, what would Premier Hertzog say of such interference in South Africa? He would say, "If you can