

maintain that if the treaty of peace which is to be signed at the end of this war is to provide for a durable peace and not a temporary one, no matter what the different clauses are, at least these five conditions have to be embodied in it. What is the first article? I will translate:

The states shall guarantee the nationalities comprised within the limits of their territory civil equality, religious liberty and the free usage of their language.

And the free usage of their language. In the minds of these great men, of these unprejudiced patriots of different countries, the free usage of their language is to be a source of peace, harmony and happiness amongst the nations and amongst the different nationalities composing those nations. They also believe that the absence of these guarantees, or the non-respect of these guarantees, would be a source of trouble, discord and war. Are we in this country to be deaf to such appeals? I was glad this afternoon to hear one of the speakers who preceded me quote certain extracts showing that England and France had made proposals for the adoption of both the English and French languages in both countries as soon as possible. That idea is only in harmony with the wishes of this conference which is representative of all nationalities and all civilized countries. If that is true of any national minority in any country, I believe that here in this country we have more than one reason to adopt this principle of international law as developed in later years. We have other reasons because here it only would it be in the interest of peace and harmony, not only would it prevent discord and trouble and ill-feeling, but it would be the best way for the English majority to show that they not only ruled the country but that they appreciated what was in it. It would also enable the English majority to be in harmony with all English majorities throughout the whole Empire. After listening to this argument, moderately presented to this House and submitted to the public opinion of this country, I believe that the province of Ontario should hesitate before deciding to continue to be the exception in the British Empire and that it will readily abide by this principle of international law, of natural law, of British fair play, and will do its bit towards harmony in this country just as in the province of Quebec we have always done our bit to promote harmony amongst the people of our Dominion.

If I have touched upon all these sub-

jects, if I have brought forward all these reasons, I do not wish to have anybody believe that we French Canadians in this country think that this Regulation 17 is the last stroke at our language in this country, that our language will perish and that our national identity will disappear. I am confident that the French language is in this country to stay forever. Why? No matter how many laws are passed by Provincial Legislatures, no matter how many regulations are passed, I maintain that you cannot turn a Frenchman into an Englishman by process of legislation. I maintain that you cannot muffle a whole race by statute and that you cannot gag a rising generation by enacting a regulation on education—why? Simply because nature is stronger than the will of man. This is a natural law. We follow the law of nature, even when we do not think it; the work is being done even without an effort. Having read the history of this country and learned that at the Conquest there were in this country only 60,000 French-speaking citizens, and remembering the many efforts that have been made to have the French language disappear from our laws and from our practice, who can say with any appearance of sense, now that we are a people of two million and a half, that a by-law will endanger our national identity! No, Mr. Speaker, no man believes that. But this by-law does render less happy the lives of a number of law-abiding citizens of this country, and when you take away happiness from a portion of the people you are taking it away from the country at large, and you are doing an unpatriotic act. I believe that the more obstacles you put in the way of the expansion of a nation, or in the way of its retaining its identity, the more you assure to it its perpetuation. This has been shown in the history of most nations where this problem has been dealt with. Do you want an example? Centuries ago descendants from the same stock, men of French origin, came into the new world. Part of them went towards what is now called Canada; the other part towards what is now called New Orleans. Both these parties were surrounded later on by an Anglo-Saxon population, and both encountered the same dangers of assimilation. And what was the result? In New Orleans the French language and the French identity of the early French settlers has practically disappeared. On the other hand, in this country the French language and the