

A DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGE

is no proof of national weakness. The Scottish Highlanders, who at Quebec, at Waterloo, and at Alma vindicated their loyalty and their prowess knew not, perhaps, a word of English. Patriotism with them was not a matter of words, but a reality, and when their country was endangered, and her honour assailed, the loyalty which they had learned on their native heath in the Gaelic of her kilted clansmen was a sufficient inspiration in every national emergency. So long, Sir, as history shows that the highlands of Scotland or the romantic hillsides of Carnarvon can produce a race of heroes, we who reap the fruits of their victories need not quarrel over the language in which they have learned to love their country. As a Canadian, I cannot understand why we should raise the question of nationality or creed at all. While it is true that Ontario is a Saxon province, we must still remember that Canada, of which Ontario forms a part, was discovered by the French; that it was first occupied by the French, and its early settlement was entirely owing to the enterprise of its French citizens, and that it was not until 200 years after its occupation by what is now called an alien race that the supremacy of England was established. Are we to say to those who possessed this land years before it felt the touch of Anglo-Saxon civilization—to those who had subjugated its forests and the Indian tribes who made it their happy hunting ground—to those who had explored its rivers and lakes—shall we tell the descendants of these intrepid explorers and pioneers that they are an alien race—that we are the lords paramount of the soil? Even if we were disposed to assume towards them an imperious and haughty attitude, surely we are not so ungenerous as to forget the services they rendered us in more than one crisis in our history. Do not hon. gentlemen know that when the Americans declared their independence in 1776 that an attempt was made to wrest Canada from the British Crown. When Generals Montgomery and Arnold swooped down upon Quebec, who came to the rescue? Was it not the French habitant—the alien of to-day—who was then the trusted champion and defender of the British flag a hundred years ago.