



Hon. Senator Bernier's Speech.

IN THE SENATE, FEB. 7, 1900.

LOYALTY—UITLANDERS V. MANITOBA CATHOLICS—STRATHCONA'S SOLDIERS—IMPERIALISM.

Hon. Mr. Bernier—The circumstances under which we have this year assembled are such as to fill the heart of every British subject with anxiety and his mind with a feeling of responsibility that can hardly be expressed. It is only two years since we were in this House rejoicing at the number of years that Providence has been so good as to give to Her Majesty and at the prosperity and peace that had adorned the long reign of our Gracious Sovereign. Today, however, instead of that peace, England and her colonies are entangled in a war, the first result of which has been full of surprise and sorrow. It is some consolation, however, to be able to refer with pride to the gallantry of our troops. Errors may have been committed. As to that, however, we should be very reticent, because we are not in a position to pass any judgment. What we see clearly is the bravery and gallantry of every man bearing the uniform of Her Majesty's soldiers. In his remarks on this subject, the mover of the Address has referred to the loyalty of that group of the nation to which we both belong. No doubt he had in his mind some outside utterances which have been, to say the least, very ungenerous. I must join with the hon. gentleman to vindicate the loyalty of the French Canadians. Indeed, to say the least, it is very annoying to have, after a century and a half of conspicuous loyalty and of good services to the Crown, to undertake a demonstration of our loyalty. Why, hon. gentlemen, few years had hardly elapsed after the surrender of Canada to England when we showed our loyalty. At the time of the American rebellion, who were the disloyal people, French Canada or the English colonies south of us? Then there was a whole generation still living which had seen the French flag floating over the Quebec citadel. Many hearts were still bleeding at the remembrance of the disaster which had brought the change. At that time also appeals were made to them. Those appeals sounded like the trumpet of liberty, and liberty from men having the same blood running in their veins. For it is well known that Lafayette and Rochambeau themselves sent invitations to the French Canadians to join the battle of the 13 colonies. Nevertheless on that occasion, as on subsequent occasions, our people remained loyal to the British flag—our militia went to the front and secured thereby Canada to England. For it cannot be denied that if French Canadians had cast their lot with the Americans, Canada was lost to England. England could not have then saved Canada any more than she has saved the other 13 colonies. And since then

nothing has taken place to impair the situation in that respect. To-day, if a plebiscite was to be held to ascertain whether any desire to return to French allegiance exists amongst us, so general would be the negative answer that we may say that the whole population would vote for the statu quo.

There are reasons for that which I need not refer to at present. I may mention, however, the fact that notwithstanding any friction that may from time to time arise here and there, we have been enjoying for a long time such an amount of liberty under the British flag that there is everywhere a general satisfaction as to the lot that good Providence has bestowed upon us. We are enjoying to a full extent the advantages of a self-governing people, and we hope that nothing in the future will happen to alter that position.

I have just made an allusion to some friction which arises sometimes amongst ourselves. Everybody must have understood that I was referring to the position in which the minority of Manitoba has been placed.

The hon. Minister of Justice, in giving some of the reasons which seem to him to be a justification of the present war, has pointed out the fact that the Uitlanders were denied the privilege of teaching their own language in the schools; yet these Outlanders had no positive right to that privilege under the Transvaal constitution. They could only claim that privilege by virtue of the polity of nations.

But nearer home there is a small group of population the ancestors of which have been the pioneers of the country. There is a minority which has positive rights under the constitution of their country, yet the privilege which is claimed for the Outlanders, and which is held so important as to be made a reason for going to war, that same privilege is denied to the minority in Manitoba. Does it not strike everybody that, if we are going to redress the grievances that our fellow subjects may have in the various parts of the world, we should begin at home? This brings me to the school question. The government has refrained systematically from making any reference to these matters in the Speech from the Throne for the last two or three years. It is sought to submerge that question in the ocean of oblivion, in dungeons of death. But, let nobody be deceived. That question is not settled nor dead. The minority will make it an issue at every favourable occasion, and until it is fairly settled, the people of Canada will hear of it. Although the circumstances seem at present to be unfavorable to the claims of the minority, there is sufficient vitality left in that minority to have its privileges upheld wherever and whenever required. It is well to explain what is the present situation. I maintain that parliament has still jurisdiction in this matter, and has the duty of interfering, unless the province itself goes to work and does what is right. The jurisdiction of parliament remains until the province has complied with the remedial order of 1895. On the other hand, as parliament has not yet taken action, the province can also of its own motion take action in the matter. As the

matter stands, its jurisdiction still lies, by the fact that parliament has not taken action. There has been of late quite an exhibition of loyalty. I am sorry to say that in so far as this question is concerned we find our province and the Dominion in a condition which savours a good deal of disloyalty. What is the refusal of Canada to obey the command of Her Majesty and the decisions of her tribunals, if not disloyalty in disguise? Surely the time must be near when all this should be righted, and then contentment to its full extent will reign again over all the Dominion, bringing with it new expression of devotion to our political institutions, to the British rule, and to the empire.

The Speech from the Throne makes reference, and very properly so, to the action of Lord Strathcona coming forward and undertaking to send at his own expense, a large contingent of troops to the Transvaal. Everybody will join with the government in this expression of satisfaction. But it is matter of regret that no reference had been made to our soldiers. Surely the generosity of Lord Strathcona is commendable. But the man who leaves his country, goes valiantly to the front, and offers his life for the sake of his country is worthy of recognition from his government and from the nation.

We have here in this Senate fellow members whose hearts are beating with pride and with fear on account of the dangers that are now in store for their sons on that distant battlefield. Let us express to them our sympathies. Let us say to them: 'May God spare the lives of your beloved sons and thereby spare to yourselves all the anxieties consequent on such sacrifice.'

I desire to give some consideration to a remark which has fallen from the hon. Minister of Justice, and which must have been of great interest to every member of this House. The hon. Minister of Justice said, in speaking of the imperialist movement, that it must be evident to everybody that the elaboration of a new constitution—he called it an imperial constitution—was going on. Truly we are in the presence of much that is unusual. There is much which seems to be agreeable to many; there is much which gives alarm to others. An imperial constitution, what is that? Nobody as yet has perhaps a clear idea of this new born project. It may be that improvements may be made in our relations with the mother country, and if any real improvements are adopted, nobody will be more satisfied than I. But, hon. gentlemen, we must remember that the time is not distant when we were engaged in a very hard struggle to get self-government. Now we have it. Shall we be persuaded that self-government is no more the political ideal that we thought it to be? If we cast our eyes elsewhere, if we study the history of other nations having colonies, or having had colonies, what do we find? No one has been so successful in the administration of colonies as Great Britain. Most governments have either failed to give satisfaction to their colonial settlers, to get from them what they expected, or have lost their colonies, while England has seen her colonies growing year-

ly in population, in prosperity, in devotion to the empire. Why is that? Because England has been wise enough to concede to her colonies self-government, and because the colonies have found full liberty under their own political institutions. Canada has been a wonder to all foreigners and to all students of national or social evolutions. The colonial system of England is a wonder to everybody and a pride both for the mother country and for the colonies themselves. Let us indeed find some improvement to that condition, if there is any to be found, but at the same time let us not forget that self-government has been the object of our struggle in the past and must be retained by all means, with all its privileges.

A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE

The zealous patriots who had so bravely prevented Lewis Gabriel from lecturing in Winnipeg were falsely informed that he would lecture in St. Boniface on Thursday evening, the 8th inst., and so, considering that they were the keepers of their French Canadian brethren, they determined to affront the ire of the Welsh lecturer with the slight odds in their favor of several hundred to one. The first intimation of the coming loyal army was the entrance of eight or ten unknown Winnipeggers into the St. Boniface Town Hall premises occupied by our capable chief of police, J. L. Gagnier. They met him about 7:30 p.m. on the stairs leading to his private apartments, and when he inquired what they wanted, they said they had come to hear Lewis Gabriel lecture in favor of the Boers. The chief replied that he had not heard of any such lecture, but if they would accompany him he would go round and inquire. They thus left the Town Hall and walked toward the river bank. There the chief noticed that quite a crowd of men were marching down the opposite bank of the Red. As soon as this crowd came to the level bed of the frozen river, they formed into regular marching order with small flags flying and tin horns, mouth organs and bugles making the night hideous. They numbered, not a thousand, as one of the daily papers said, but over two hundred. Though there were many lads among them, there was also a goodly sprinkling of able-bodied men, evidently well organized.

When they reached the St. Boniface bank, Chief Gagnier called upon them to halt, which they first hesitated to do until he had told them who he was, and then they listened respectfully while he explained that Gabriel was not here and he (the chief) was surprised that they should think he was. "Well, at any rate," said one of the ringleaders, "we'll go on to your Town Hall and sing God Save the Queen." The chief gracefully acceded to their wish and led the way. By the time they got there and realized that the hall was in darkness, they called upon the chief for a speech. Meanwhile, several of our fellow-citizens, with the proverbial small boy conspicuous, had assembled to witness the unusual gathering. The chief, mounting the frozen plat-

form of the town pump, said that, though he was pleased to welcome them, he grieved that the Winnipeg people should think the citizens of St. Boniface would allow any pro-Boer meeting in their Town Hall. He was not aware that any one here had entertained such a notion, but his hearers might rest assured that, had Gabriel come, the St. Boniface people could dispose of him without any assistance from elsewhere. Thereupon the crowd gave three hearty cheers for Chief Gagnier for the Queen and the loyal people of St. Boniface, and formed into marching order for the return. As the tail of the column was going down the river bank some urchin called for cheers for Kruger, which made the rear-guard turn back and start in pursuit. But once more the chief expostulated with them, pointing out that they ought to have sense enough to know that no responsible person could utter such a cry. This pacified the doughty warriors and they left for good, but not before some irresponsible idiot among themselves had fired rotten eggs at the door of an inoffensive citizen of St. Boniface.

Our people are disgusted with the whole tin horn demonstration, the rather as it was evidently organized by some busybodies who kept away from the disgraceful scene. Lewis Gabriel's letters on the school question had no weight with our fellow-citizens; because they were considered too stupid to be worth reading. The mere fact of his wishing to lecture against England was enough to turn our loyal French Canadians against him and to refuse him a hall, if ever he should ask for it.

Mr. Nicholas Bawlf, who has been confined to his house by a disease which required an operation, is, we are glad to hear, improving.

Last Tuesday many of the fellow clergymen of Rev. Father Raymond Giroux, parish priest of St. Ann's, foregathered at his hospitable presbytery to wish him a happy feast. His Grace was there and Rev. Fathers Fillion, Joly, Cherrier, Bourret, Gravel, and Lalonde. There was a charming entertainment at the convent in the evening.

His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface, accompanied by Rev. Father Gravel, left yesterday for Prince Albert on a long promised visit to his suffragan, Monseigneur Pascal, O. M. I. This is the first time Mgr. Langevin is able to visit the princely northern town. He will be absent ten days. Mgr. Legal, O. M. I., will join His Grace at Regina.

There are now 200 Catholic officers doing duty for the Empire in South Africa. Major General Kelly-Kenny, who commands the Sixth Division of the South Army Corps, is an Irishman, 59 years of age, and entered the army in 1858. He is a zealous Catholic, a bachelor, a native of County Clare, and one of the foremost and bravest of British generals of the present day.

Plum Puddings and mince pies often have bad effects upon the small boy who over indulges in them. Pain-Killer as a household medicine for all such ills is unequalled. Avoid substitutes, there is but one Pain-Killer, Perry Davis'. 25c. and 50c.