

the English language. There may have been among them one member from the western district, of French origin—perhaps Monsieur Baby, who for years was the sole representative in the province of Upper Canada of that portion of the French race who were living in Upper Canada. Are we going to be less liberal? Forbid it, Mr. Speaker. In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in the name of the progress of this country, I appeal to all our friends in the House, without reference to party, to forget what may be an inconvenience when they go back to their constituents on both sides, to forget that for a moment, and to merge everything in the great desire to make Canada, French and English, one people, without any hostile feeling, without any difference of opinion, further than that which arises from the different literatures and the different strains of mind that run always in different races and which sever the Scotchman and the Irishman from the Englishman as much as it severs the Frenchman from the Englishman. Let us forget this cry, and we shall have our reward in seeing this unfortunate fire which has been kindled from so small a spark, extinguished for ever, and we shall go on, as we have been going on since 1867, as one people, with one object, looking to one future, and expecting to lay the foundation of one great country.

In 1890, speaking on the motion to abolish the French language in the Northwest territories, Sir John said:

We have a constitution now, under which all British subjects are in a position of absolute equality, having equal rights of every kind, of language, religion, of property and of person.

Please remark hon. gentlemen the words: "equality of language"—does by-law No. 17 respect the views and advice of the eminent statesman?

Sir John Thompson moved in amendment to that motion, as follows:

That this House, having regard to the long continued use of the French language in old Canada, and to the covenants on that subject embodied in the British North America Act, cannot agree to the declaration contained in the said Bill as the basis thereof, that it is expedient in the interest of the national unity of the Dominion that there should be community of language amongst the people of Canada.

Sir John Thompson, as you see, hon. gentlemen, refused to admit that the community of language was in the interest of the national unity of the Dominion.

All the Prime Ministers of Canada, including our most esteemed colleague, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, held the same language and took the same position towards the rights acquired or possessed by minorities.

I shall take the liberty of quoting the words pronounced by Sir Mackenzie Bowell. There are many things which I could cite, many quotations which I could make, all so

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eloquent and good as deserving to be again recorded, but I will be content with citing the following one, which is so much in accord with the position I take now; it is the justification of my motion, which does not go further than these words pronounced by our honourable colleague.

I took this ground in the Government of which I had the honour of being the head for a short time, and the Government of which I was a member under other heads, that certain rights were guaranteed by the constitution to all, whatever their race or creed might be, and that these rights should be respected at all hazards. I am still of that opinion, whether the complaint come from the Protestants of Lower Canada, or the French half-breeds of the Northwest, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me—it is simply a question of the constitution and the maintenance of peace and harmony throughout the country.

They all declared that our national or religious difficulties should be settled by way of conciliation.

I think proper now to read an extract from the eloquent speech made by the Premier of Quebec, Sir Lomer Gouin, at the opening of the Legislature:

I desire to make an appeal in the name of the entire population of Canada—of English Canadians, Scotch and Irish, as well as French-Canadians—to the Government and to the majority of the province of Ontario. In the name of justice and of the generosity of which England has given so many proofs, and which cannot fail to animate every truly British citizen, as well as in the name of the struggles which our forefathers sustained in opening to civilization the rich domains which are our common patrimony, I ask that justice be done to the French minority of Ontario, and that if necessary they be not only justly, but even generously dealt with. In the name of the sublime expressions that it has given to human thought, I ask for the French language the right to come to the lips of the school children of Ontario who wish to learn and to speak it.

Let us see now how this eloquent appeal to fair play and justice was appreciated by the Journal of Commerce of Montreal:

In this eloquent passage we have the finest spirit of true Canadianism. Canada is a country inhabited by peoples of different races and different creeds. It is a land where above nearly everything else, we need toleration and broad-mindedness. It should not be necessary to argue as to the legal rights of minorities. The majority everywhere, especially when such delicate questions as those of race or creed arise, should not ask themselves, "how little can we grant to the minority and still keep within the law," but, "how much can we grant, how far can we go, without doing injustice to any to meet the claims, the wishes and even the honest prejudices of the minority?" We are confident that if the question of the French language in those sections of Ontario where the population is largely French is approached in the spirit