

Mr. PAQUET: (Translation.) I will say only this: I shall forgive the hon. member for Temiscouata when he has the courage to admit in this House all the weaknesses which he is accountable for since 1896. Mr. Speaker, I call on the hon. member for Temiscouata to speak out his secret thoughts, that will dispense with him giving out to the papers what he should say here.

Mr. GAUVREAU: (Translation.) I rise to a point of order—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order, order.

Mr. GAUVREAU: (Translation.) I represent here the people as well as you do, gentlemen, and I rise to a point of order. The hon. member has no right to make insinuations of a personal character against me. If he has charges to bring out let him do so manfully.

Mr. PAQUET: (Translation.) I wish to deny that I am making charges.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: (Mr. Blondin): (Translation.) I understand that the hon. gentleman is desirous that the hon. member for L'Islet do that very thing?

Mr. GAUVREAU: (Translation.) And that, he should withdraw what he said. Any way, I forgive him because he does not know what he is saying just now.

Mr. PAQUET: (Translation.) One should have the courage of making charges in this House, and if the member for Temiscouata has any charge to bring against me, let him do so, and in order to facilitate matters, I shall take my seat.

Mr. GAUVREAU: (Translation.) I think the hon. member would act wisely in proceeding with his speech without putting any question to hon. members.

Mr. PAQUET: (Translation.) If my hon. friend should have his way, I should bear on my shoulders a burden which he himself could not carry; but I am ready to assume responsibility for my actions, and I proceed with my speech.

By force of circumstances the Canadian people, in 1760, joined a new political community. I glance over the doings of British office-holders, as they did not express the ideas of the statesmen who then had in hand the destinies of the Mother Country. Since 1850, liberal England, through its wisdom and fairness, has conquered our hearts, which are made of pride and noble sentiments. At the present time, for the French Canadian, the supreme guarantee of his rights and privileges is the British Crown. On every occasion when any of our rights or any of our privileges is infringed upon, if we French Canadians think that we cannot obtain redress before the courts of this country, there still remains for us, as a supreme recourse, to go before the highest tribunal of the Empire, the Privy Council, that is the Crown; and

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every time the British Crown, protectress of our rights, has given us justice. In proof, the decision rendered of the Manitoba school question. Whenever Canada becomes independent, we French Canadians will no longer have the advantage of that supreme protection.

At the Imperial conference of 1911, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Hon. L. P. Brodeur and Sir F. Borden, all three representatives of Canada, agreed with the Imperial authorities that Canada would take charge of the naval defence throughout an extensive region on the Atlantic and on the Pacific. That important fact was unknown to us during the campaign against the Laurier naval scheme. The Prime Minister has no right to repudiate the obligations taken at the Imperial conference of 1911. As men of honour we should accept that share of the burden which has been laid on our shoulders by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. To do honour to the pledges of the former Prime Minister, we are meeting present needs by adopting a more economical means and by leaving to the people their right of being consulted whenever the time comes for proposing a permanent naval policy. In 1840 we had just come out of a terrible crisis during which blood had reddened battlefields. Our constitution had been suspended, and a death warrant had been deliberately issued against our nationality. Our franchises were imperilled, our rights violated, and our political existence threatened with utter destruction. The union of the two provinces, imposed on Lower Canada, was an unfair and tyrannical act. Our province was deprived of the number of representatives she was entitled to; the use of our tongue was prohibited in the legislature. Lafontaine condemned a constitution which interfered with our rights, our tongue and all that makes up the soul of a people. But he saw in the constitution guarantees of responsible government, one of the finest of British institutions. Owing to the wise and prudent policy of Lafontaine, French Canadians made rapid progress towards a régime of justice and prosperity. The Liberal French Canadian Opposition, under the direction of Mr. Bourassa's grandfather, Papineau, levelled at Lafontaine the same insults, the same taunts that are levelled to-day at the successor of Lafontaine, the hon. L. P. Pelletier. He was accused of being a traitor to his country; it was contended high and low that he was sacrificing the rights of his fellow citizens, when his sole ambition was to ensure to his province the high position which we now occupy in the Dominion. We should be thankful to Lafontaine for having refused to isolate his fellow-countrymen, intent as he was on securing the most sacred rights of our nationality.

In 1867 we had undertaken to establish in North America a powerful nation under the folds of the British flag. A fellow-