

Is it not remarkable, and is it not regrettable, that, while we have discussed in this House transportation, shipping, trade after the war, employment of capital and labour, returned soldiers, and many other questions affecting after-war policy, the very question which is most important, which is most vital to the existence and permanence of the Canadian Confederation, has been shunned by everybody? We have discussed matters of dollars and cents; but when it comes to discussing the Canadian soul and making an examination of the national conscience, nobody does anything, nobody dares say anything or if he does he runs the chance of being called an agitator and a demagogue. Are we going to continue to live in this fool's paradise? Are we going to do the ostrich trick every day, in the hope that the storm will blow over unnoticed or unfelt? Are we going to allow the two races to get farther apart every day until the situation gets absolutely beyond solution? Do you want conditions similar to those which have prevailed in Ireland for three or four centuries to prevail in Canada? I know what I am talking about, and nobody knows better than I do that we are not at this very moment far removed from those very conditions. Yet nobody thinks about it, no one dares speak about it, and if one does, and it does not matter how judiciously, he is called a demagogue and agitator.

To-morrow I shall be attacked in the Toronto papers for having dared to discuss this question on the consideration of this Bill; but I owe it to my people, I owe it to my English-speaking friends, and to Canada and its future peace and unity to speak on this subject. This is a time for clear thinking, it is time for plain speaking, and, so far as I can command the English language, I intend to speak my mind plainly. My intention is not to find fault or to reproach any one, but simply to accomplish my duty as a loyal Canadian and a lover of British institutions, as one who has spent practically all his life in this province doing his best to support British political ideals and institutions.

May I again make a personal reference? For more than 30 years I have associated with English-speaking friends; I have taken a large part in all that interests them in their social life, their clubs, their sports in every way that I could. I have helped to the best of my ability their philanthropic, charitable and scientific institutions, and in every place where I thought I could be of assistance. I have subscribed my money

towards these objects, to as great an extent as my means allowed; and, if there is a man who has a right to speak on this subject, if there is a man who has a right to stand up and say that so far as he knows he has never uttered a harsh or cruel word against his English friends, it is I. I have tried to understand the point of view of the English speaking Canadian and I have openly sympathized with it, whenever I could do so and when I could not I have remained silent: I hope I shall not be considered fatuous in saying that I think that I am as near an approach as exists in Canada to that type of Canadian which the fathers of Confederation hoped for.

Hon. Mr. BLAIN: Will my honourable friend permit a question?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Certainly.

Hon. Mr. BLAIN: Will the honourable gentleman state what complaints he has against the province of Ontario?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I will name some of them, I could not name them all. One of them is the pernicious and abominable practice so long in vogue in Canada of promoting party welfare by appeals to prejudice and passion, another is the attempt to proscribe the French language.

Hon. Mr. BLAIN: By whom?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: By the Conservative party in Ontario. My honourable friend knows as well as I do that for thirty years there has not been one provincial or federal election in the province of Ontario that has not been fought by the Conservative party by means of appeals more or less disguised to prejudice and passion. I have in my possession pamphlets, dating as far back as 1886 or 1887, in which the Catholic clergy of Ontario and the French Canadian population are depicted in the most insulting way. "No popery! no French!" that was the cry in the first election in which I took part in this province, and the same thing has been going on more or less ever since. It is not even necessary that there should be an election for these outbursts as all of us know that on the 12th of July every year, here in Ottawa and in the surrounding country, and in the province generally, the same theme of discussion at every meeting is: "No popery! No French!" My honourable friend knows it as well as I do. He knows of the agitation for the abolition of the separate schools; he knows of the P. P.