

win. The confidence which he had looked for, he found; it turned out to be as he expected. It was not only reciprocal and durable. Above all it was fruitful. That policy obtained for the French-Canadians the restoration of the rights of which they had been deprived by the act of unions; it removed the dissensions, which up to that time, had rent the land; it introduced amity and concord among the different races and branches of the Canadian family; it established a permanent and ever-growing prosperity; it increased loyalty to the Crown and brought it to its highest pitch of enthusiasm and devotion; it brought up Canada, step by step, stage by stage, to the high position which it occupies at this moment; and as I said at the beginning, so I say in conclusion, this is the last and crowning effort of the policy which was then happily inaugurated. Sir, we must advance, we cannot remain stationary. We must advance. To remain stationary in this age is to retrograde; we must advance. And again on this occasion, as in the days of Lafontaine and Baldwin, we appeal to moderate men in all parts of the community. We appeal as they did appeal, in a spirit of amity, of union, of fraternity; we appeal, as they appealed, in the highest conception of the duty which we owe to our country and to the mother country. It is the tradition of these great men, which is our supreme inspiration to-day in turning this page of the history of Canada.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I join most sincerely in the regret which has been expressed by the Prime Minister at the continued illness of the hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, which prevents him from addressing the House upon the second reading of this Bill. However, my right hon. friend the Prime Minister has taken up that task. He has addressed to the House a very long speech, more than three-fourths of which had absolutely nothing to do with the subject which is now occupying the attention of the House and of the country. The right hon. gentleman seems to think, for some reason, that this is the year 1837. This is not the year 1837, and we are not engaged to-day in a discussion as to whether this country shall have autonomous rights and privileges. That question was settled 75 years ago. It is significant that when my right hon. friend finds himself in circumstances of peculiar difficulty with his own party, he always goes back to the days of 1837, and quotes to us, not only from the speeches of Lord Durham, but from the eloquent orations of Mr. Lafontaine and Mr. Baldwin. It is an old piece of tactics on the part of my right hon. friend, and I sincerely condole with him

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

to-day in the circumstances in which he finds himself. Why, Sir, he told us in the first place, that he had an absolutely united party behind him; and then, not very long afterwards, we found him dealing at great length with criticisms which had been made upon his course in the province of Quebec, and presumably from members of his own party.

The right hon. gentleman has seen fit to introduce a great subject most profoundly affecting, not only Canada, but the whole empire, in a highly controversial and partisan spirit. He has indulged in what he calls a retrospective glance, accompanied by observations more or less dignified as to the supposed divisions in the ranks of the Conservative party. Well, Sir, there is no attempt to gag any one in the Conservative party, and there never will be, I hope.

But my right hon. friend has invited some remarks which otherwise I would not have felt impelled to make to-day; he has given us a retrospective glance, but his retrospective glance does not go back to some periods that perhaps he might be well inclined to forget, and he has conveniently forgotten them to-day. He speaks of criticism from the province of Quebec. Sir, I venture to tell him this, that if he has received any criticism from men who, in the past at least, have been his followers in the province of Quebec, that criticism and that feeling are due to himself more than to any other man in Canada. A retrospective glance seems to suit the humour of the right hon. gentleman to-day. Well, Sir, what was his own aspiration in the days of 1891 and 1892? His teaching in regard to this matter in the province of Quebec was summarized in his own hearing, in this House, only three years ago, by one of his own followers, and it was in words which are to be found in 'Hansard' of the 29th of November, 1896. It is the language of Mr. Bourassa, a disciple and follower of the right hon. gentleman; and here is Mr. Bourassa's language, which was not called in question by the right hon. gentleman at the time it was uttered:

Well, sir, what was the language of Mr. Laurier in Boston in 1891: that Canada would never consent to imperial federation even on commercial lines alone, because the consequence would be the participation of Canada in British wars, and Canada would never consent to participate in British wars.

Was that or was that not the teaching of my right hon. friend in 1891 and 1892? Does he now deny that summary of his position which was given by his own follower in this House and which was not denied by him at that time? Well, Sir, we may go on to a little further retrospect since my right hon. friend is anxious for retrospects.