

*Bilingual Currency—Mr. Dorion*

Some hon. MEMBERS (Translation): Call in the members!

Mr. DORION (Translation): Our great river travelled over each year by hundreds of ships bearing the flags of all the nations of the world, stretches across the old French province of Quebec and notwithstanding their active part in the national life and trade with the foreigner, the Canadian of French extraction, is forced to use a unilingual currency, on which nowhere is advertised the important part it plays, the great endeavours he has made during three centuries, to safeguard the welfare, happiness and vigour of his country.

Our currency represents the amount of wealth there is in this country. But currency also represents something else, it is the outward symbol of the soul and characteristics of a people. If, according to circumstances, it has an intrinsic value, it is more particularly a symbol of the nation's wealth. But is it not for Canada a great asset to be inhabited by the descendants of the two greatest races in the world? Is it not an asset for this country to be able to draw from these two distinct nationalities the qualities which are inherent to them? Is it not an asset for a country to be able to give to the world an example of liberty, mutual respect, peace and harmony? Is it not a great asset for Canada to possess a duality of formation and character protecting her against the invasion of foreign ideas? Then why not advertise this asset abroad and even here by a bilingual currency?

Providence whose designs are unfathomable, decreed, one day, that the descendants of two great races should unite to build up a young but vigorous nation.

The past cannot be effaced or even ignored.

Nations have an heredity, a genius which is their own, a turn of mind characteristic of them; currency should therefore bring out this heredity, genius and turn of mind by displaying dual inscriptions.

In the past, the great leaders of the Conservative party recognized the rights of the French Canadian minority. They are the ones who, at all periods, have given the most perfect examples, in our political history, of their broadmindedness and conciliating spirit, because they were aware that it was necessary to the welfare of this country; they knew of no friction or cause of dissension among the races which inhabit it.

Mr. FERLAND (Translation): Is the hon. member referring to Sir Robert Borden and the right hon. Mr. Meighen?

[Mr. Dorion.]

Mr. DORION (Translation): Permit me sir, to quote what Sir John A. Macdonald stated, this excerpt has often been quoted:

Whether the country was conquered or ceded we now have a constitution by which all British subjects enjoy absolute equality and possess absolute equal rights in all matters: language, religion, property or person. There is no dominating race here; there is no vanquished race in the country. We are all British subjects and those among us that are not English are not the less British subjects.

May I add to this testimonial that of one of the best friends of our race, the right hon. Mr. Meighen:

Some hon. MEMBERS (Translation): Oh! Oh!

Mr. DORION (Translation): . . . who stated on June 4, 1926:

Experience has proved that the traditions of our two great races cannot die, that they can very well live side by side without fusing or losing their character, and that there can be no question of the assimilation of one by the other. It is the first article of Canadian policy that the traditions of both races be respected, jealously, scrupulously, to maintain in harmony the constitutional rights of minorities, to encourage as much as possible the study of the two languages by our people and to disseminate also, with the understanding of our laws, the mutual understanding which we should have one for the other,—and this is far the most important.

I further add that of the distinguished leader of the Conservative party, the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett):

We have a difficult country to govern. It is immense; it is half a continent inhabited by a population numbering less than 10,000,000, descendants of two great races, and having different religions. Our constitution, let us not forget, is a federal union based on a contract entered into between two races and endorsed by the parliament at Westminster. This constitution grants to minorities certain fundamental rights. Whether these minorities inhabit provinces which are mainly Catholic or Protestant, matters little. These rights were granted unreservedly.

Let the statements of these eminent men serve as examples and a guide to the Canadian people, they will feel stronger and greater, when realizing that with them, liberty, tolerance and the spirit of respect for minorities are not vain words.

Mr. CHARLES BOURGEOIS (Three Rivers-St. Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I deem it my duty, not only as a Conservative but as a Canadian of French descent, to make a few comments concerning the motion of the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Boulanger), which proposes that our coin shall be stamped in the French language as well as the Eng-