

*Bilingual Currency—Mr. Chevrier*

or engraved upon steel, whether written upon parchment or upon paper, let us see what it means: Sir Hector Langevin says:

It was perfectly well understood at the conference of Quebec that the French language should not only be spoken in the courts of justice, in the federal parliament, and in the legislature of Lower Canada, but that precisely as is now the case, the Votes and Proceedings of the legislature, as well as all the federal laws and those of the legislature of Lower Canada, should be printed in both languages.

He continues:

These are the principles upon which the new constitution will be based, and I feel justified in going so far as to say that it was impossible to secure more effectually this essential privilege of our nationality and at the same time our civil and religious institutions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we come to this peculiar point, Mr. Geoffrion, who was then the member for Vercheres, had raised the point that the proposed section was not explicit enough. I am just now meeting my hon. friends on the other side. Here was a member of the assembly who said: No, that is not explicit enough, do not trust to those people. He said that stronger language should be used so that in later years—

... we should not be told when we exclaim against that injustice (the failure fully to recognize our rights) "you should have obtained more full and complete guarantees, and you should have seen that the constitution was made more explicit and more precise on that point.

Does anyone to-day desire to say Mr. Geoffrion was right, in the light of the spirit that guided those men who brought confederation to pass? Does anyone desire to argue that because it was not stated from A to Z in the bond, we are strictly limited to the letter of the law? Does anyone desire to argue against the loyalty, sincerity and chivalry of those who prepared and executed that bond? Does anyone on the other side of the house desire to argue that the parties to the bond should have looked on one another and treated one another as sharpers, villains, cut-throats? That would be doing a fearful injustice to those men of courage, vision and fairness who loyally and with mutual respect, frankly and without reservation, executed a bond wherein they honestly believed they were writing what was to be the magna charta of Canada, and which was to do justice to all, to respect the rights, liberties and privileges of all. I submit that if it is our right to have issued in both languages writs, mandamus, habeas corpus or any processes out of federal courts, why should it not be equally our right to have the one dollar bill or the gold piece stamped or engraved in the two languages, more particu-

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larly now that the mint is under federal control? Just because that section was not made to contain all the ramifications that go with the protected rights and privileges, shall it come to pass that we are denied them? That just because that section did not contain all the usual conveyancer's phrases by which we lawyers are wont to express our thoughts, therefore all that is not included is excluded? That just because that section was not drawn to the tune of whereas and wherefore, and "right, title, interest therein and thereout, under, over, through or above"—because all that verbiage was not used, should the spirit of the law not be recognized? Mr. Speaker, if the souls and the spirits of those great departed were here in this chamber I am sure they would say that what I now express was in their minds at the time, namely that bilingual money is included in the language rights of that section, just as the sheaf of grain is in the seed that is placed in the ground.

It is perfectly true that in section 133 nothing is said about coinage. But let me read section 137 of another constitutional act, that of South Africa, another bilingual country:

Both the English and the Dutch languages shall be official languages of the union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality and possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights and privileges; all records, journals and proceedings of parliament shall be kept in both languages, and all bills, acts and notices of general public importance or interest issued by the government of the union shall be in both languages.

Sir, the statutes of South Africa are published in both languages, issued concurrently one with the other, on the left side the English, and on the right side the Dutch. What difference is there in spirit between section 137 of the South African constitution and section 133 of the British North America Act? In that act there is nothing said about publishing or printing or coining money. But, sir, it was my great privilege when I was in South Africa in 1924 to visit the royal mint there, and it was my greater privilege to be presented with specimens of the first coinage turned out by the South African mint in 1923. I now hold in my hand specimens of the coinage under section 137, wherein there is nothing said about money, but wherefrom the spirit emanates and radiates throughout South Africa and finds its expression in the national life of that country. What do I find? I have in my hand a South African gold piece which has a Latin inscription on its face. When I come to the shilling, however, I find that it bears this inscription: "South