

all the protection of provincial rights that it could wish to have. I never heard from the lips of any member of this house a single expression that would lead me to believe he would tolerate for a single moment any infringement of provincial rights.

Having said that, I am going to speak now as a man who was born in the province of Quebec and tell Mr. Duplessis this.

If ever the French Canadians in this country lose their faith or their language it will be due to themselves and themselves alone, but I know that that will never come. I make that statement deliberately, because there is no reason why religion or language should be mixed up with a question of this kind. It would be just as logical for Mr. Drew to say, in Toronto or in Kingston or even in Ottawa, that in signing dominion-provincial contracts the Protestant faith and the English language would be destroyed. I have lived forty years in northern Ontario, among English-speaking people of the Protestant faith, as well as among French Canadians, and I think you will believe me when I say that it has never occurred to any English-speaking person to do anything to prevent me from being a Roman Catholic. I say that deliberately and sincerely. If I have seen people who have not received that amount of respect which they thought they deserved it was because they were not true enough to their own faith or the French language.

On the question of language, it is true that the Canadian minority in Ontario had to fight for their rights and to the members of parliament I say, you should have seen the moving spectacle of French-Canadian mothers surrounding elementary, separate bilingual schools because there was legislation passed in Ontario—rule 17—which attempted to stop the teaching of the French language in the primary stages in the elementary schools. But by organization, through the vigilant guidance given by L'Association de l'Education de l'Ontario, by the rising of our men and women as one person, using all the weapons of democracy and just plain good judgment and intelligence, and speaking as one as Canadians of French descent, we brought our case before the provincial authorities for consideration, the privy council, the Ontario legislature and public opinion.

I want you to remember that the man who had put that unjust law on the statutes of Ontario, the Hon. Howard Ferguson, after years of practical and necessary agitation, was sufficiently courageous—because it needed courage—to repeal that act. The French Canadians are logical. They had logic on

their side in this important question for them, therefore we thought that we could rely on the fairness and sense of justice of the English-speaking majority in the province and we succeeded.

Is there any single member, whether from the province of Quebec or from any other part of Canada; is there any single federal member who is prepared to tell us now that if the province of Quebec should sign an agreement with Ottawa it would mean parting with the rights of that province, either constitutional or natural, either faith or language? No one could make that statement because it would be absolutely untrue. That is why I deplore any statements that are not Canadian, statements that are not constructive. To my compatriots I will say this: If we respect ourselves in the province of Quebec and outside the province of Quebec; if we are true to our faith and to our mother tongue; if we are vigilant about our rights we shall be respected by the rest of the Canadian people.

One word about the premier of Ontario. I live in northern Ontario, and sometimes we make jokes about what is called Queen's Park, because it is so far away from us. The premier of Ontario seems to be afraid of centralization resulting from a dominion-provincial conference. He blows hot and cold, however; hot one day and cold the very next. At the conference, Mr. Duplessis walked out and Mr. Drew followed saying, "We shall have nothing more to do with it". A few weeks later, Mr. Drew said that we must have another conference, and then, later on, he declared that he would have nothing to do with a government in which he had no confidence. I would ask hon. members from Ontario whether that is the word of a statesman and whether it shows cohesion and consistency.

I respect Mr. Drew just as I respect all the premiers that have been in office in Ontario. I was honoured with the personal friendship of Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Finlayson and Mr. Hearst during the first years I lived in the northern part of the province. But there are certain things that the Canadian people must know about his lack of confidence in the federal government.

The Prime Minister, the leader of the present government, has not been at the head of this country by accident. The Canadian people, through the ballot box, soon find out the weight and ability of a man whom they put at the head of a country, a man who is to govern the country for years. If he is found wanting he does not remain long in office. How long has the Prime Minister been at the head of affairs in Canada? Mr. Drew should remember these things. I have mentioned