

*The Address—Mr. Picard*

since this session has started. His trying to make the people of Canada, and in particular the people of Quebec, believe that the Prime Minister has sinister intentions against the autonomy of the provinces and his attempt to build himself up as the hero defender of minorities remind me of the story of the man who, after looting a store, was pursued by the owner and his clerk. Seeing a policeman at the corner, the thief pointed to his pursuers and shouted: "Arrest these men, they have robbed me!"

The leader of the opposition after having proven himself, in company with Premier Duplessis, as the man who did the most to scuttle the dominion-provincial conferences, now turns to the Canadian people and says, pointing to the past and present prime ministers: "They did it." And his cohorts repeat as one man, "They did it." But that is not enough for the member for Carleton (Mr. Drew), so he asks his supporters to depict the Prime Minister as the enemy of his own racial group. This is done in the hope that he—the man whose publicists must work hard to explain or refute some of his bright sayings of a few years ago, which he never denied at the time—might emerge from this as the new saviour of the rights of minorities and the new friend of the same province of Quebec.

This is just a farce, Mr. Speaker, but a sad one when you see the leader of the opposition interrupt the Prime Minister during a quotation he was giving the house on January 31, and say in a most insinuating way: Mr. Prime Minister, was it not in the same speech that you dealt with the subject of language and the right of this parliament to deprive any group in this country of a particular language if it was felt that should be done? What a method, Mr. Speaker! What a system of deliberate insinuation! Yet the statement made by the Prime Minister after the insinuating question by the member for Carleton was clear and well-defined, and his stand consistent with the terms of the constitution and the intentions of the fathers of confederation.

I need not go into details of the masterful exposé of the question the Prime Minister gave earlier in this session as it is still present in the minds of hon. gentlemen of this house, as it is in the minds of those who read its terms in the daily press.

The Prime Minister spoke with courage in 1946, as he did in this debate. The people of Canada will see the difference between his straightforward answer and the dubious methods of the Tory party. The more he is attacked by such methods, the more the Prime Minister will gain the respect and confidence of the country by his truly national attitude.

[Mr. Picard.]

(Translation):

As for his fellow citizens in the province of Quebec, they will not be taken in by such deceitful tactics. At almost the very moment when Mr. Duplessis' spokesman and the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) were being moved to pity at the very thought of the dangers that the Prime Minister's attitude might cause to the French language, two important associations of the province of Quebec, the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste of Montreal and the Société de la Survivance française expressed their confidence in the Prime Minister in no uncertain terms and acknowledged his fondness for the French language. I now wish to read the text of the messages which were forwarded to the Prime Minister:

The general president and general directors of the société Saint-Jean Baptiste of Montreal were very pleased to learn about your official visit to the Canadian metropolis. The Société Saint Jean Baptiste of Montreal, the national organization of the French Canadians, would very much appreciate the honour of an hour's visit with the general council on March 5 or 6 next on the occasion of a reception organized in tribute to a compatriot who, having become the Prime Minister of Canada, proclaimed through his energetic example the rights of the French language in the House of Commons.

Please accept our warm congratulations and our cordial invitation.

(Signed) Arthur Tremblay,

General President of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste of Montreal.

And here is the one from the Société du Bon Parler français:

To the Hon. the Prime Minister:

The Société du Bon Parler français deems it a privilege and a most pleasant duty to congratulate you for having recognized the bilingual character of Canada in giving more prominence to the French language in the House of Commons when the new session of parliament was opened.

We are confident that we express the feelings of all French Canadians in assuring you of our most sincere and patriotic gratitude.

Most respectfully yours,

(Signed) Jules Massé,

General President.

Such an answer from the province of Quebec ought to satisfy those who, in this house or elsewhere, try to represent the Prime Minister as an enemy of the French language.

Does not that prove that the Prime Minister's compatriots are aware that he has at heart the safeguarding of their rights and that he will not fail to uphold them should they ever be seriously threatened?

(Text):

As to possible threats to rights given to them by article 133 of the British North America Act, from which party would they come in this house and in parliaments to come? It surely could not be from the Liberal party, which has been for more than sixty years their haven of refuge when they