

THE BILINGUAL QUESTION—*Con.*

language also because we sincerely feel that it is the sweetest and purest and noblest language which has ever been spoken by human lips. We love it because of its great literature. We love it for its glorious history, 3679. But when that man strives to defend and to propagate his ideas there is a limit which he must not overstep, and that limit is my rights and my liberties and the rights and liberties of other people as well. It is against such interference that the French Canadians of Ontario are now protesting, 3680-1. What is peculiarly painful is that this unholy war is being waged at the expense of the most sacred and innocent victim; at the expense of the child, 3682. We must inspire Canadian public life with a lofty and courageous spirit; we must protect the equal rights of all the citizens; and above all, erect in this Canadian land a strong and solid wall against the mad blows of violence and prejudice, 3884.

I rise to plead before the people of Ontario, in behalf of His Majesty's subjects of French origin in that province, who complain that, by reason of a statute passed by the province, they have been deprived of rights, in matters of education, which they have enjoyed, themselves and their forefathers before them, ever since Canada became a possession of the British Crown, 3697. Sir, now that I have laid down the ground upon which I propose to proceed, let me try, if possible, to lay before Parliament the genesis of the agitation which, unfortunately, is now raging in the country, 3698-3700. I want to have the matter discussed here so that on all sides we may frankly approach the subject from the basis of our common Canadian nationality, and, if possible, find a meeting ground where we shall be able to say to the minority: "You shall not go further than that," and the majority, "You should grant what is reasonable; you should, at all events, make some concession." I ask no more than that, 3700. My aim and purpose in approving of the resolution of my hon. friend from Kamouraska is rather to appeal to the sense of justice of the province of Ontario—justice between man and man, justice not according to the letter of the statute, but justice according to the conscience of every living man, no matter what his nationality may be. I will now put forward the view which I intend to present to the House upon this aspect of the question, 3701-7. If there is this exclusion of the French language which we complain of to-day in the manner which I have stated, is it because there is distrust of the French race? You do not look to the great body of the nation; you look only to certain extremists who have made use of the most detestable language, 3708-9.

*Lemieux, Hon. R. (Rouville)*—3715.

The bilingual issue has reached such a climax that to-day we are face to face with a condition and not a theory, and I do not intend to set up a case on behalf

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of the minority based on any treaty or any statutory enactment, 3715-16. Our traditions, our laws, our language, constitute the inheritance which was left to us by our forefathers in 1759. It is a glorious heritage which any man of honour will always treasure. Would not my English-speaking friends have less respect for me if I were unfaithful to that sacred trust? 3717. Is it not an elementary proposition that, the English and the French languages, having been thus declared official, in the spirit if not in the letter of the Constitution, it follows that the teaching of both languages was intended to be left free and untrammelled, 3718. The French Canadians want equal justice. They want fair treatment, nothing more and nothing less, 3719. Regulations 15 and 17 referred to, 3720-1. With regard to this question of natural right, the right of a child to learn and to speak the language of his mother, is just as sacred as the duty which devolves upon parents to look after their children, just as sacred as the duty which devolves upon children to support their parents if they are in need, 3722. May we not, long after the plains of Abraham, "meet each other, understand each other, love each other?" There are, I know, obstacles embedded in the memories of the past, but can they not be overcome by goodwill and mutual forbearance? 3723.

*L'Esperance, D. O. (Montmagny)*—3811.

While listening yesterday to the very eloquent speech of my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, my mind wandered back to the great drama, or rather to the great tragedy that took place in the House of Commons twenty years ago. But while my mind dwelt on the tragedy which took place in 1896, and the comedy now being enacted in this House, I could not help thinking that his eloquence at that time served to kill a practical and constitutional measure that would have brought relief to his compatriots in Manitoba, while to-day that eloquence is used for no other purpose than to create political strife in this country, 3812.

*Macdonald, E. M. (Pictou)*—3819.

The resolution of Mr. Costigan in 1872 referred to, 3819-20. What is our situation here? This resolution is not an invasion of provincial rights. This Parliament does not in any way intend to interfere with provincial jurisdiction, 3822.

*Macdonell, A. C. (Toronto South)*—3780.

To my mind it is to be doubly regretted that this resolution is now before the House. I think it is untimely and inappropriate, both because of the undesirability of raising the cry that this motion will raise and has raised in the country, and because a matter of still more importance, and one that I think we all have at heart, is engaging out attention and that is the purpose of prosecuting this war with a