

Mr. DUPRE: So therefore Mr. Taschereau put himself on record, with Mr. Ferguson, as being opposed to the policy adopted by my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Justice at the Imperial conference of 1926 and the conference of 1929. At all events, when we found ourselves there, we thought we should abide by the wishes expressed by Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Taschereau. We admitted the fact, submitted by Mr. Ferguson, that our constitution was really an agreement made between the provinces after full consultation and discussion, and we contended that the provinces should be consulted before any amendment or imperial statute should be passed.

We had two reasons for so doing. The first reason was that we did not want to alter any agreement which was arrived at between the provinces without consulting the provinces, and in the second place we did not want in any way to imperil directly or indirectly the rights of minorities. My hon. friend the ex-Minister of Justice said this afternoon that he thought the best safeguard the minorities could have were the minorities themselves. I would say to him that this need not be the only safeguard. What about a good text of law or a good clause that would also safeguard the rights of the minorities? The attitude taken by my hon. friend from Quebec East is very generous; it emphasizes the fact that he has great confidence in the spirit of justice and fair play of his compatriots. I agree with him on that point, but I say I would like also to be able to rely on some clause or text of the law in addition to trusting to the fair play and justice of those around me.

Mr. LAPOINTE: But could we not have that text of law enacted by a Canadian parliament instead of an imperial parliament?

Mr. DUPRE: Then so much the better. But my hon. friend would not be right in saying that the best or only safeguard of the minorities lies in the minorities themselves. I am saying this not because I am suggesting that my hon. friend is wrong; but standing by the rights of minorities, I wish to be on the safe side. And in addition to the safeguard mentioned by my hon. friend, I should like to have some legal clauses or texts of law.

As regards appeals to the privy council, my hon. friend from Quebec East seems to be opposed to such appeals. And the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) seconded him. I agree with the latter part of the address given by the hon. member for Labelle, and I

[Mr. Lapointe.]

say with him that Quebec will not blush when it comes to a question of leading the way. But may I suggest to him that, with regard to the question of appeals to the privy council, there are pros and cons. The remarks of my hon. friend from Labelle are to the point. But there are some very good arguments against his point of view. And the question is not whether Quebec would blush, or would not be able to take the lead, but whether this is the opportune time to abolish appeals to the privy council. Some people will say that we should abolish these appeals; others will say perhaps that this is one of the few ties that still bind us to the British crown. I am not prepared myself to express an opinion definitely; I am only a young member and there are before me others of great experience. But I do not think that this is the proper time to say whether one is for or against these appeals. If the practice is an evil—which I am not ready to admit—there must be a remedy. And the question is—would not the remedy be worse than the evil if it were applied at the present time? A third point I wish to deal with briefly—

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend mentioned the necessity and desirability of having some legal text, as he put it, or statement of law by way of protection. Would he point out to the house any difference between the section contained in the report of the conference of 1929 and section 1 of the address which is now before this house, so far as protection of minorities is concerned? I invite him to do that.

Mr. DUPRE: My hon. friend has misunderstood me, or else I did not express myself clearly; perhaps it is my fault. I was simply commenting upon the principle enunciated this afternoon by the ex-Minister of Justice when he said that, for him, the best or only safeguard of minorities was in the minorities themselves. That was all I was commenting upon.

Mr. RALSTON: Does my hon. friend suggest that there is any difference, so far as protection of the rights of minorities is concerned, between the section as drafted by the conference of 1929 and the section contained in this address?

Mr. DUPRE: I do not say there is a great deal of difference, but the point I am emphasizing is this: that before the statute which we are discussing was submitted to the house we did what my hon. friends opposite did not