

were hypnotized and put into a trance I do not know. But at those conferences nothing was claimed. You would imagine that people accustomed to British liberty, to British privileges, when proposals of this kind were laid before them, would ask for some correlative privileges, which every Britisher is proud to possess throughout the world. But no. At one conference there is a resolution proposed by an Australian delegate, and carried, to the effect that in so far as diplomatic and confidential relations would allow, it was proper for the British government to communicate commercial treaties to the colonies. Lord Tweedmouth, Mr. Chamberlain, and other English public men, imbued with the broad principle that responsibilities of this kind carried representation, had stated, as Lord Tweedmouth did at the conference of 1907: We dont ask you to do this without inviting you to share in the representation. That proposal was in harmony with British ideas. But on our side nothing was asked, nothing was claimed. I do not mean to say that if these things were in that shape before us, I would adhere to them. I think that 'sufficient to the day is the evil thereof'. But I am impressed with the idea that nothing seems to have been asked, and that we entered into this unlimited scheme of responsibility in such a manner as to distinguish us completely from the British subject who lives in the British isles, and who himself controls the foreign policy of the empire.

Now, I notice that at a meeting of the Women's Canadian club at the city of Quebec. His Excellency the Governor General, in a very interesting speech, spoke as follows, after having devoted his attention for a considerable time to a justification of imperialism:

(Translation). Is there in the world a people more privileged than the people who inhabit the fine province of Quebec? Your laws, your language, are under the special protection of the British Crown. In return for so many privileges and advantages, the Crown exacts nothing from you except sentiments of loyalty. The word 'imperialism' does not imply active intervention from England in the government of this country; the word 'imperialism' symbolizes the power of each of the units of the empire and absolute liberty in each of these units.

Now, I do not for a moment apprehend that these remarks of Lord Grey before the ladies of Quebec would have any practical result upon this very important political question. We have not reached that stage which gave rise to the old French saying, 'Le royaume est tombé en quenouille.' But I would be curious to know in what respect this scheme increases the amount of liberty that we enjoy at present, and in what respect it increases the happiness we have succeeded in obtaining in this country, and which we at present enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, I said a moment ago that I thought from their position and from what I know they know, my friends from the province of Quebec who sit on the other side of the House would look at this question more seriously than they seem to have done. I have been several years in this House and I have been astonished at their conduct sometimes, I am bound to say after what I have alluded to, as to the struggles which took place in our province for the obtaining of the liberties which we now all enjoy and for which I think some credit is due for what was done in the province of Quebec. I have seen these gentlemen in this House vote against the maintenance of the rights that were claimed for the minority in the organization of the new provinces of the west, I have seen them vote against the maintenance of the right which all parties in this House admitted to exist with regard to the French language in these provinces when at one time I moved for the maintenance of the strict right of the French Canadian to speak—only to speak—in that language in both of the assemblies of these provinces. They voted against it when it was admitted in this House by every jurist that that right stood exactly upon the same plane as the right to free education. I have seen them remaining during all these years utterly indifferent to the denial of the rights of the minority in Manitoba after having heard them say what they said in my province before the elections in 1896. I must confess to these gentlemen that their final cheerful adhesion to the scheme now submitted to this parliament is an additional, and I may say, a somewhat painful surprise, I would like to move, Mr. Speaker, although I agree with something that is contained in the motion moved by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, a sub-amendment as follows:

This House, while declaring its unalterable devotion to the British Crown, is of opinion, that the Bill now submitted for its consideration changes the relations of Canada with the empire and ought in consequence to be submitted to the Canadian people in order to obtain at once the nation's opinion by means of a plebiscite.

After the long explanation that I have given I think the House will realize that it is the right of the people of Canada to be consulted upon this new policy. I think it is an infamous denial of the rights of the people to pass on and carry through this scheme without even giving them a chance, they, who are the absolute masters, of expressing an opinion with regard to a policy which is new to us, new to them, has never been even mentioned before the people of this country and upon which they have the right without any doubt of expressing their free opinion.