

and creeds, and may I be permitted to suggest that we be left to ourselves to deal with the faults and the virtues of the province of Quebec? That is equally true if you reverse the situation. May I not say to my friends from the province of Quebec that in the discussion of this question, perhaps it was not necessary that we should refer to the faults and the virtues of our fellow Canadians from the province of Ontario. Can we not for the moment forget those things? Can we not too forget the differences of race that exist? Things have been said from one point of view and from the other that, frankly, I do not think it could have been pleasant for any Canadian to hear. It does seem to me that it was most unfortunate that it should have been thought necessary to say these things in the discussion of a question whose decision is of such vast import to this our common country, and in regard to which it is of such prime importance that whatever that decision be, it may, when it is once reached, be presented for acceptance to a united people.

We are of different races in this country, but we are all Canadians. I have suggested that we forget for the moment that we are of different races. I do not want to suggest that it is desirable that we should drive from our memories the history of our progenitors. I firmly believe that there is no greater or more overpowering influence that directs the actions of men than the race feeling, and no call which men respond to more readily than that of the blood. It works for great and good results. I am not here, therefore, to suggest to anybody that it is his duty to forget those from whom he descends, or to repudiate the race to which he belongs. But, there is a time and a place for everything. Here, to-day, when we are dealing with a question, a right or a wrong decision on which will carry with it consequences that none of us can foresee—consequences that will have to be borne, not by ourselves alone, but by our children and our children's children for many generations—am I not right in saying that it is incumbent upon us to concentrate our minds upon the one fact that we are all Canadians, and that this is a question of what is the duty of Canadians to Canada here and now.

I would have made no reference to the matter of which I am about to speak if the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat (Mr. Lafortune) had not taken upon himself the responsibility of telling you, Mr. Speaker, and this House, not only what my constituents in the division of Montreal,

[Mr. Doherty.]

St. Anne, thought about this question, but that he has come here to tell us the settled conviction of every Canadian of Irish blood within this country, and he says that they are all convinced the same way. The hon. gentleman will allow me to question his authority for making that statement. The men of my blood speak for themselves, and the men of my blood who have the glorious privilege of being Canadians, are as thorough Canadians as breathe within the limits of the territory of this country. They do not need the direction of my very good and very highly esteemed friend from Montcalm to tell them what they ought to think about this subject. The hon. gentleman was eloquent about the lack of mandate with regard to a great many other things, and as he spoke I asked myself whence came his mandate to speak in this House for all Canadians of the Irish race. There was not one exception; he knew all about it. Then he bewailed my sad fate: that I should be standing alone, separated from them all. I thank him for his sympathy, but I do not feel that I need it.

The people of my race are as intelligent a people—I am paying them a high compliment when I say that—as the people of the race of the hon. member for Montcalm. That means that they are quite capable of judging for themselves, and that they will consider this matter from the standpoint of Canadians anxious to do their duty. I do not doubt that there will be differences of opinion among them; some will reach one conclusion, and some will reach another. But they will not, as the member for Montcalm says they will, in one body pronounce themselves absolutely on one side of a question, with regard to which there are argument, serious arguments pro and con. The hon. gentleman is entirely mistaken when he undertakes the responsibility of making that suggestion. He will allow me, further, to submit that he is a little rash in assuming that responsibility simply as the result of attendance at a meeting convened by gentlemen, all of them my very good and very highly esteemed friends, but all of them members of the Liberal party in Montreal. The member for Montcalm went to that meeting and, in consequence, apparently considers that to him has been handed over, as it were, the entire Irish race in Canada, and he comes here and represents that the Irish race in Canada are throwing their weight and judgment in one scale in regard to this matter. That is not exceedingly modest on