

THE BILINGUAL QUESTION—*Con.*

gentlemen opposite can trust the men who represent the people of Ontario to deal justly and fairly with the French children in that province, 3758.

*Foster, Sir George* (Minister of Trade and Commerce)—3790.

I have listened attentively to every speech that has been made, including the speech which has been made by my hon. friend who has just taken his seat (Mr. Graham), and I acknowledge to this House and to myself that now, just at this moment, I am more mystified as to why this resolution was ever brought here than I have been at any other time during this debate, 3790. The greatest crime that a man can commit in a democratic country is to refuse to obey the laws that the democracy imposes upon him, 3791. Disallowance is no good, he says; disallowance is no good, said my right hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) over and over again; disallowance will not do what is desired, said others in this debate, over and over again. How is it—and here is a question that troubles me—that for week after week, for month after month, an agitation has been carried on, paper and ink have been freely used, and thousands upon thousands of people were led to sign a petition to this Parliament, asking for disallowance as a remedy for a grievance which is alleged, 3792. There is another thing with regard to my right hon. friend. In all his speech I did not hear a single word of condemnation for the firebrands, for the violators of law on the other side of the question, and not only the violation, but the denial, and the flouting of it under my right hon. friend's front windows, 3793. Once you open the pathway to a resolution which involves an interference with a legislature which is acknowledged by hon. gentlemen themselves to have enacted within its powers a law which they would not ask to be disallowed, the very moment you open a path with reference to the province of Ontario, you open it for every province in this wide country, 3794.

*Girard, J.* (Chicoutimi and Saguenay)—3822.

If Parliament is entitled to discuss my hon. friend's resolution was it not open to us a few weeks ago, while the Ontario and Manitoba Legislatures were both in session, to submit at both capitals with some chance of success the humble prayer which this House to-day is asked to formulate? But now there is behind the present resolution no possible sanction, and at any rate any chance of better conditions is retarded a whole year by the delay in presenting such a resolution. With the present widespread perturbation, I should suggest that new men, independent of the present organization, get together and endeavour to bring about a redress of the grievances complained of by peaceful and diplomatic means, which alone will bring back to Canada the quiet it enjoyed heretofore, 3824.

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*Graham, Hon. G. P.* (Renfrew South)—3785.

It has been suggested to me many times during the past three weeks that were I to vote for any resolution touching on this delicate question I should be preparing material for a first-class political funeral. If so, blessed are the dead, 3785. I want to reiterate that, so far as I am concerned, I would not vote for a resolution, much less speak for it, which had even the semblance of interfering with the rights of this province or of any other province, 3787. Disallowance referred to, 3787-8. If some enactment can be passed that will make it so clear that lawyers cannot differ, and everybody will know what this legislation means what the Ontario Government says it means, there will be no cause, I think, for the grievance among those who are now complaining, 3789.

*Lamarche, P. E.* (Nicolet)—3758.

The question of education is a question which is dealt with separately in the British North America Act. The subject is limited by a special proviso dealing with certain guarantees given to denominational creeds in this country. It is true that this guarantee contemplates religion. But I maintain that the French-Canadian Catholics have in that section certain rights as well as their English-speaking co-citizens of the Catholic creed, 3759. The general terms in which this resolution has been worded allows, in my opinion, no serious objection to be taken as to the advisability of bringing it before the House, 2760. Now, a rapid review of that Regulation 17 will reveal the fact that it changes altogether the system of education and is detrimental to our interests; and, as I have already said, this is the proper place to discuss this matter, 3763-4. Is the abolition of the French language useful, necessary, or desirable in any way in the interest of the welfare of this Dominion? For there must be a reason for gradually abolishing the French language, as is proposed, 3765-6. I am confident that the French language is in this country to stay forever, 3767. A great deal has been said about this matter having been brought up as a political question. I am not here to speak for any one except myself. As far as I am concerned I would consider it a crime for any one to mix with the petty questions of politics a cause which to every French Canadian is sacré, 3768-9.

*Lapointe, Ernest* (Kamouraska)—3678.

This question, from its nature, has become a national question. We cannot ignore it. We have to treat it courageously and patriotically. There is no question which affects vitally one section of this country which does not affect the others; especially is that the case when it relates to the language which one-third of the population of this country claim as their birth-right, 3678. But we love the French