

I remember an episode on the arrival in Canada of the Marquis of Lorne as Governor General. This noble personage having landed in Quebec took the railway, now the Canadian Pacific Railway, en route for Ottawa. At a certain station in Lower Canada where the train had to stop for a short time, people of different nationalities assembled and an address was presented to His Excellency, who gave his answer in French. Shouts of "English, English!" having reached the ears of the noble Marquis, he replied:

"No, no, gentlemen, I am sure you understand French as well as I do, so it is not at all necessary that I should repeat in English what I have said in French to you all."

It seems every intelligent man present understood the great lesson given by the Governor, since no more shouting was heard, and every one enjoyed the French speech and seemed delighted, unlike so many others whose fanaticism will not allow them to be convinced of the supreme ridicule which they cast on themselves by their constant efforts to have French abolished as an official language.

Let me now refer to a letter written by a gentleman of this country on this same subject. Mr. E. W. Thompson a Montreal citizen, deals with this subject in the following words:—

#### "THE CANADIAN IDEA.

"A VIGOROUS ARGUMENT FOR CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN FRENCH SPEAKING AND ENGLISH SPEAKING CANADIANS.

"To the Editor of THE STAR:

"SIR,—In reproducing articles from *L'Etendard* and other French Canadian journals on the race question, you are, doubtless, rendering good and much needed service to the country. English speaking Canadians must be the better for thorough acquaintance with the views of their French speaking compatriots. These understand and accept the situation much more completely than do English Canadians. French speaking citizens do not entertain so absurd a belief as that the English of Canada will become French for any sake. Once the English completely cease to imagine that the French will consent to obliterate themselves for the sake of an ideal unity, the understanding and acceptance of facts may become mutual. Then the Canadian idea will be either consciously maintained on all hands with the result of a firmer national solidarity, or be distinctly rejected by our English speaking people with the probable result of civic broils and ultimate annexation of the English provinces to the American union.

"What I mean to signify by the Canadian idea may be very shortly illustrated. Let us take the voice of *L'Etendard* for that of French Canadians at large. Even in its angriest moments that voice has declared the French Canadian wish to stand firmly with English Canadians in maintaining the Confederation and advancing its strength and prosperity.

"The Canadian idea is simply that citizens shall be forever free to speak the language they choose and hold the creed they choose, and advance both as they may be able, who place their bodies and goods heartily at the service of the Canadian State.

"That idea is fully embodied in the Canadian constitution, which provides for the employment of both the English and French languages in public business. Hence those proposing or plotting to exclude the French tongue from official use and French ideas from all the weight that votes or ability can give them in the national councils are exactly as untrue to Canada as would be those who might propose to exclude the English tongue and English ideas. I take it that the true Canadian, whatever be his origin or creed, will be prepared to resist the revolutionary doctrine that either race may change the constitution with design to facilitate the wiping out of the other. Those who talk excitedly of this being a British province have to reckon not only with those who describe it as a French province, but with those English speaking men who regard Canada first, just as the English speaking American regards the United States first. Not for Quebec, not for Ontario, not for Great Britain, not for French, not for English, but for Canada first and always, that I believe to be the intent of the majority of the young men, the forces of the present and the rulers of the future. And to them a proposal to make Quebec, or any other of their Provinces, British is surely not only absurd in its impracticability, but offensive, exactly as offensive as the proposition to make Lancashire Canadian or Yankee would appear to the people of that country.

"In opposition to the Canadian idea that a great country may be satisfactorily governed and defended by the harmonious action of citizens differing in race and language, it has been said that there is no example of such a country in history. Perhaps the assertion should weigh lightly as an argument, when we consider what multitudes were slaughtered of old time, to maintain the opinion that a State could not survive more than one tolerated religion. But it is not a fact that we lack historical examples. Nothing need be said of Austria, Belgium, Switzerland or Germany—countries notably either prosperous or strong, though each includes different races and creeds. Scotland also may be left out of account, though her people, divided by race and language, were always able to withstand the English till both crowns came to a Scotch king. For there is one country which furnishes the complete example required. It is a progressive country in every sense; a country of free law-abiding people, rapidly growing in number; a country where men are so consciously well off that they have made immense sacrifices to preserve their institutions. Despite their distinct separation in race and language, its people have stood shoulder to shoulder in war, successfully repelling invasion from a much more powerful nation of the same race and language with one of their own communities. In like manner they have heartily labored together in carrying out the most stupendous and costly system of public enterprises ever undertaken by a people of like numbers. Every year, every decade, every generation since its two races began political work together, certain agitators, bigots, fanatics and pessimists of that country, endeavoring to breed trouble between them, are in the end being "Thrust like foolish prophets forth, their words to scorn are scattered, and their mouths are stopped with dust." Not a point can be adduced of validity against the assertion that the country I instance has practical and enduring solidarity. Denial can find nothing to say except that the country can't stand because each of its races is jealously conservative of its distinctions and a little given to complain that the other is overreaching. To