

If he had gone on, he would have read that all the larger countries of Europe provide us with exceptions—England, France, Germany, Italy, even Austria. Freeman points out that there are islands which both speech and geographical position seem to mark out as French, but which are English—as truly English, as truly devoted to England, as truly a part of the British Empire in feeling, as the people of London. I allude to the people of the Channel Isles, men of the same blood precisely and coming from the same district of France as the French Canadians. They are, I will say, as true to England, I believe, as the French Canadians are to Confederation. Why? Freeman asks. Because circumstances led them to cleave to England though their kindred in Normandy became French; and one again and again sees in the article—which I hope my hon. and learned friend did not read—that circumstances control more than language. The insular Norman, though speaking French, did not become a Frenchman, and he is to-day a loyal part of the British nation speaking French.

"These instances," says Freeman, "and countless others, bear out the position, that while community of language is the most obvious sign of common nationality, while it is the main element, or something more than an element, in the formation of a nationality, the rule is open to exceptions of all kinds, and the influence of language is at all times liable to be overruled by other influences."

Now, Sir, take Quebec: will any man suppose for one moment that, notwithstanding the mountebank utterances of the present Prime Minister of Quebec, notwithstanding this stuff about the tri-colour, and hustings nonsense of that sort, to which nobody pays any attention, and notwithstanding those articles in the press, which my hon. friend thinks controlling—he knows very well that there have been articles in the English press of Canada which if a man were to take as an exponent of the sentiment of the Canadian people he would be regarded as demented—will any man suppose that if Quebec

could to-day do what she pleased, she would cut the painter with this country and England, and go over to France? (Cries of "No!" from the French members, and "Never!"). You know very well, from the character of the people, from their political and religious convictions, that they cling to the British flag. Now, Freeman points out that political and other reasons forbade the annexation by Germany of quite a number of countries; and then he comes to those parts of the world where people who are confessedly of different races and language, inhabit a continuous territory and live under the same flag. Then Freeman instances—and, of course, my hon. friend, when quoting Freeman, fought shy of this, which would be all right, you know, before a jury, but it is not right before the jury of the people of Canada—the Swiss Confederation, which he says has what my friend quoted him to prove that it it could not have, namely, a full right to be called a nation in a political sense. (Cheers.)

"It has been formed on a principle directly opposite to the identity of race and language. That Confederation is formed by the union of certain detached fragments of German, Italian and Burgundian nations. German is undoubtedly the language of the great majority of the nation. But the two recognised Romance languages are each the speech of a large minority forming a visible element in the general body. While German, French and Italian are all recognised as national languages by the Swiss Confederation, the independent Romance language which is still used in some parts of the Canton of Graubünden, that which is known specially as Romansch, is not recognised."

Mark his word, in that article:

"It is left in the same position in which Welsh and Gaelic are left in Great Britain, in which Basque, Breton, Provençal, Walloon and Flemish are left in the borders of that French kingdom, which has grown so as to take them all in."

Now, what does Mr. Freeman say of this Swiss Confederation, which has five languages and three official languages?

"Yet surely," he says, "the Swiss Confederation is a nation. For all political purposes the Swiss Confederation is a nation, one capable of as strong and true national feeling as any other nation."