

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—How can we otherwise interpret the speech of Mr. Geoffrion at Beauharnois? He said there, before a ballot had been cast, that the temperance people would get their plebiscite but they would not get prohibition. If the matter had not been settled, why should Mr. Geoffrion make that statement? There was a time when hon. gentlemen opposite were professed economists, but that was some considerable time ago, and we do not hear anything about it now, but the expenditure of a quarter of a million dollars on the plebiscite vote for a purpose that had no utility, in their own estimation before the vote was taken, and which they have treated with the greatest contempt since—

Hon. Mr. MILLS—I think there was a commission on one occasion that cost something.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—That is always the way with my hon. friend. When my hon. friend finds that he has done something very foolish and very wrong, and which he cannot possibly defend, he quotes somebody who has done something bad at some other time, just as if the mistake of another government is going to condone the offence of his own government on the present occasion. I never was one of those who thought it was a useful course to appoint a commission, but there was this much to be said in its favour: it was an effort to get information, and certainly if you look at the voluminous character of the report, there ought to be information there. It certainly cost the country a great deal, but if it was ten times as foolish and bad as it was, it affords no palliation whatever for the conduct of hon. gentlemen opposite in resorting to that dodge of the plebiscite which they never believed in, which they evidently never intended to carry out to an issue, no matter what the vote was, and which they now treat with the utmost contempt. After nearly 300,000 people recorded their votes in favour of prohibition, the hon. gentlemen say that expression of opinion is not strong enough, and they are not going to do anything. A good deal of exultation has been expressed in government circles over the Imperial penny postage policy. They have not been at all slow in claiming that they have accomplished

it for the whole empire, though they do not say so in the speech from the Throne. I am glad of everything that tends to bring the different members of the empire closer together, but when anything is done in that direction it should be done wisely and carefully, and in such manner as will cost the people of this country as little as possible in the matter of self respect as well as in dollars and cents. I have no hesitation in saying that in self-respect Canada has lost a good deal in this postal matter. The proclamation "I, William Mulock" had to be withdrawn in a day or two, and the expedients he had to resort to cover up that bungle, all came under the eye and observation of the statesmen of the empire and of the other colonies, and it is not at all creditable to Canada that such a bungle as that should have been made. Then the stamp itself, I do not think is of such a character that we should go into exultation over it. A good story is told, and it is an actual occurrence, that in the office in Charlottetown a man came up and inquired for a postage stamp which he wanted to put on an English letter, and he was handed the new stamp. He looked at it for a moment and said "I did not ask for a lobster label; I want a postage stamp." He actually mistook the red spots indicating the parts of the Empire for the claws of a lobster. Whatever position we occupy now with regard to penny postage and domestic postage rates throughout the Dominion of Canada, the government have not got it for us by any statesmanship of their own, they drifted into it. It was not apparent at all at the first suggestion of the question that it was the intention of this government to adopt the two-cent rate for Canada. Indeed, their actions disclose their intention up to the last moment of following a different course, and at the last moment they adopted a two cent rate of postage all over the Dominion of Canada. While it is a very nice thing to be able to send letters cheaply, as we are able to do now, we must remember that the Post Office Department has been a losing department up to this time. I believe the Postmaster General claims that he has made it nearer self-sustaining now than it was under the former administration. We will wait until we see all about that. I find it safe in dealing with these gentlemen not to take things on trust, as in the case of the settlers' effects, and the reference to the exodus. It is well to await