

into the Charlottetown 'Examiner,' is the result of the threat of my Yankee friend.

The newspapers of Canada should be above misrepresenting the views of public men on important public matters.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman must limit himself to a statement of fact.

Mr. J. J. HUGHES. I am just finishing. Sir, for the sake, possibly, of a little passing political advantage, and they should be above encouraging Yankee agitators to come into this country to make trouble. It will be a sad day for us when we will not be able to manage our own affairs without employing and encouraging such men.

#### QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

#### 'LA PRESSE' AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE.

Mr. ARMAND LAVERGNE (Montmagny). (Translation.) Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of privilege. I desire to call the attention of the House to an article which appeared in 'La Presse' on the 11th May instant, under the heading: 'That meeting at the Monument National.' The article is directed against me as a member of parliament and against the privileges of this House. It reads as follows:

It is now clear that this sudden cry for the French language in the administration of railways, is nothing but a nationalist manœuvre organized in view of the elections. At the Monument National neither Conservative nor Liberal leaders were present. And although, for the purpose of soothing public opinion, it had been everywhere proclaimed that the English element was favourably disposed in the matter, the audience refused to listen to the Hon. Mr. Dandurand, who came expressly for the purpose of making known these favourable dispositions. The conciliatory offers of the Grand Trunk, the Canadian Pacific and the Northern Railways were such as would demolish the whole fabric of the nationalist conspiracy: hence the necessity of crying them down. Such indeed are the tactics which Mr. Lavergne himself has adopted. At the second reading of the Bill in question, the 18th March, 1908, Sir Wilfrid Laurier had made the following statement:

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The Bill as a whole appears to me to embody a sound and equitable principle, but I think that in some respects its application may be too broad. My hon. friend's object is to give the public increased facilities for the transaction of business, and it must be admitted that simple justice requires that those who do not speak English should be enabled to transact business in the language they understand. . . I have no objection to the second reading, subject to the amendments which may be suggested later on.

(The motion was carried and the Bill read a second time.)

Mr. J. J. HUGHES.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER. When will it please the House to discuss the Bill in committee?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. At the next meeting of the House.

Mr. ARMAND LAVERGNE. Occasions for discussing this Bill in committee are becoming very rare, and if we do not take it up to-day we may not find an opportunity of doing so.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The matter is of importance to the railway companies and my hon. friend will understand that it is fair that they should take communication of the Bill and see whether they desire to oppose it. There are certainly excellent things in the measure, but the government should not undertake to have it carried before the railway companies have been heard.

Mr. ARMAND LAVERGNE. They have made no opposition so far.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. If they have no objection I certainly have none myself.

We are reluctant to attribute secret intentions to public men; but we have a right to point out the natural consequences of known facts. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's offer made things too easy for the member for Montmagny and his Bill would not have created the slightest sensation. The first thing that took place after this debate was the famous petition of Catholic young men published a few days later, without waiting to ascertain the fate of a measure so auspiciously introduced. There is nothing in 'Hansard' or in the Votes and Proceedings of the House to show that Mr. Lavergne made any effort to advance his Bill a stage. How is it that a member whose speciality it is to put questions to the government on every possible and impossible subject, should have neglected to call their attention and that of the House to the real or imaginary obstacles behind which he sheltered himself, without explaining their nature, at the meeting of Friday night last? If from any quarter there had been an effort to prevent the Prime Minister from carrying out the promise he made on the 18th March last, the loquacious member for Montmagny might have made use of his tongue to point it out. Nobody ever heard anything about it. It would be vain for him to allege that form of parliamentary procedure by which every day is devoted to government business; such restrictions did not exist in January, when on the 28th of that month the Bill was read for the first time. In fact, the government took precedence over public Bills on Wednesdays from the 25th March, and on Mondays, from the 2nd April. We cannot state from memory when they took up Thursdays, but it was probably later. He let more than two months elapse between the first and second readings. But the quiet adoption of the measure could not have accomplished its object better than those most reasonable letters read by Hon. Mr. Dandurand on behalf of the different companies. What was required was an organized provocation which might render its adoption impossible. Saviors and heroes had to be improvised; but they have killed the Bill in order to create a grievance.

The article then drifts into an appeal to Liberal principles. I need not insist upon that part. Nor would I seek for