

the west. Quebec has not been neglected ; on the contrary, in every case where foreign languages were employed, the language of the French Canadians has been unusually prominent.

Mr. L. ROBITAILLE (Quebec County). Before I enter into my speech, I wish to rebut the statement just made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher). I have here some literature of the Department of Immigration. Here is a special pamphlet entitled 'The Last Best West, Canada, the Twentieth Century, Western Canada, Vast Agricultural Resources, Homes for the Million.' I have another here in the same style, 'Past and Present, the Canadian West, Present Conditions and Future Possibilities.' I have here 'British Columbia,' a treatise written in the French language. I have another one which treats of New Ontario, and another one in French dealing with gratuitous land given in New Ontario. From this it is plain that we have here a minister who will stand up and make statements which he cannot back up. I assure you that I find it very strange that ministers will stand up and make statements which they cannot support with any argument. I was disagreeably surprised this afternoon when I found a man of my own race, who, untrue to the sentiments which are supposed to be born within him, stood up and advanced such an argument as would perhaps not have been so open to criticism if it had been uttered by a member of the English-speaking community. But, Sir, there are times when a man in political life forgets his own blood, forgets his own creed, and looks only to the pedestal of honours where his personal vanity can bring him, and therefore he forgets his religion. I found in the speech uttered this afternoon by the Postmaster General (Mr. Lemieux) evidence that the Minister of Marine (Mr. Brodeur), when leaving Canada had good reason to pass over French Canadian interests and entrust the administration of his department to the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Templeman), who is an Englishman. If we have to swap for an English minister like the one who is now in charge of that department, who, on taking temporary charge of a department which, under the direction of a French Canadian, without any representations being made to him, but simply on walking through the department and finding the salaries of some French Canadians not sufficient, with the increased cost of living, voluntarily raised these salaries—if that is the treatment we are to expect from an English-speaking minister, then every time I will swap an English minister against a French Canadian. I have no desire to raise any question of sectionalism ; I have travelled through the east and through the west of Canada, and I have travelled the eastern states ; I have been

Mr. FISHER.

brought into such close contact with cosmopolitan ideas and heterogeneous principles, that it is useless for any one in this parliament to ask me to look at any question from a purely provincial standpoint. If we are to expect attacks upon our nationality, if things which are not just and equitable are to be said against us, surely we should expect them only from those who do not bear French names.

This is not the first time that I have known the Postmaster General to show want of tact. He showed it in Nicolet, in Montreal, in fact every time he opens his lips he always puts his foot in a mud hole. I find it bad form on his part to have brought in the article relating to Bishop Taché. I do not want to excuse Bishop Taché for any statement he may have made against or for Western Canada, but the statements made in the House this afternoon have done more to harm the French Canadian element, inasmuch as they tended to show that our own religion is against the work which the government is attempting to do in the west. If you remember, prior to 1896, at which period the Liberal party came into power, the Catholic clergy had a great hold on the people, a hold which they had maintained from the time when Canada was given over to the English by the treaty of 1837—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. ROBITAILLE. There is a proverb which says : If ignorance is bliss, it is foolish to be wise. I mean the treaty of 1663. At that time when the French Canadians had been abandoned and handed over by a treaty to England, the clergy took hold of the material welfare of the French Canadians and became leaders among them ; and let me remind the House that there was a time when Montgomery appeared before the walls of Quebec when, if it had not been for the clergy, some of our French Canadians might perhaps have thrown in their lot with the Americans, and to-day Canada might be incorporated in the vast domain of the United States ; perhaps instead of the English flag we might have the Stars and Stripes floating over this parliament. At all events, when, in 1897, the Liberals swept this country and came into power, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, understanding the great harm that might flow from the interference of the clergy in politics, made a special trip to Rome and obtained a manifesto calling on the parish priests of Canada to withdraw from politics, and not even express opinions on them in their own presbyteries.

That statement was issued previous to 1896, and until then no fault was found against the clergy, either Protestant or Catholic ; but there came a time in 1897 when they thought that this question of religion might influence votes and become