

Mr. OUIMET denied that he and his French friends were the legal advisers of Riel. They had simply got up to take his part in the interests of justice. He was glad that the amendment to the amendment had been offered, with the preparation of which he had nothing to do, as it would show who were the friends of justice.

The French Canadians could not but sympathize with Riel, but to their surprise the Liberal Government, which so long accused the late Government of doing nothing in the matter, had pursued the same course. When the present Minister of Justice entered the Cabinet, it was the general feeling of the House that justice would be done to Riel, but to their surprise he had been equally as apathetic as his predecessors. The Premier had told him formerly that no amnesty would be granted. Then what was the position of Riel? If he gave himself up in Quebec, he would of course be acquitted, but if he gave himself up in Manitoba or Ontario, he would assuredly be convicted. The reason he did not stand his trial was because he could not receive justice.

The House rose at 6 o'clock.

AFTER RECESS

Mr. OUIMET resumed his observations upon the motion of Mr. Bowell. The amnesty, he contended, was a question of justice, though it had been shown before the House that that amnesty had been promised. He held that there was proof of promise of that amnesty in certain Parliamentary papers. An amnesty was due to Riel, and his friends, because they had been asked to defend the country in trouble. It was clear Riel could not have a fair trial in Manitoba, and he did not think he would receive a fair trial in Ontario. If he were tried in Quebec he would, as a matter of course, be acquitted. The people of Ontario would not be satisfied if Riel were acquitted in Quebec, and the inhabitants of Quebec would not consider he had a fair trial if he were found guilty in Ontario. He warned the House that Riel's expulsion might be attended with a war in Manitoba, as the member for Marquette (Mr. Cunningham) had the support and sympathy of the great portion of the population of that Province.

Upon these grounds he would vote for the amendment to the amendment, and, if that was lost, he would vote for the amendment. He believed most of the members from Quebec would vote in the same way, and they must do so if they intended to fulfil their pledges to their constituents. Had the Committee which had been appointed to inquire into the difficulties in connection with the Northwest been required to inquire into the necessity of an amnesty then let it be admitted they would have had to wait until the report was submitted to the House; but, it appeared it was thought the matter should be decided at once. He did not consider that the Sadlier case was applicable to the one under consideration, and concluded by eulogising the hon. members for Châteauguay and Ontario South (Mr. Cameron) for the close attention they had given to the subject.

Mr. LAURIER considered that at the present stage of this case the House had not the right nor power to expel Riel, and spoke in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Châteauguay. He

was of opinion that the charges brought against the member for Provencher (Mr. Riel) should first have been proved. This had not been done. He had never seen Riel, and could not be charged with any partiality.

He maintained that they should be guided by the rules of judicial evidence, and they had no judicial evidence of Riel having committed the murder with which he was charged. The Attorney General of Manitoba had given evidence to the effect that the indictment had been made, but they had in evidence that a true bill had been found upon that indictment. The rule of judicial evidence was that when the best evidence could be obtained, secondary evidence was not admissible. The evidence that had been produced before the House was not the best that could be obtained. It had been said that technical quibbles, as they were termed, were the bulwark of English liberty.

The objection he took, however, was not technical, but material. They had not seen the indictment to which Attorney General Clarke had referred, and they had not seen produced the evidence he considered it necessary they should have. He was prepared to be guided by the rules which obtained in the Sadlier case. In the first place the House should not act upon its knowledge of the facts. They required substantial proof of charges.

The second part of the case of the hon. member for Hastings North was that Riel was a fugitive from justice, but the House could not assume he was a fugitive from justice without having the return of the Sheriff that Riel could not be found or arrested.

Then it should be decided whether an amnesty had been promised to Riel or not, before they could say he was a fugitive from justice. If it were found that he had not been promised an amnesty, then if Riel did not appear at the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba to take his trial—then, and not till then, would Riel be a fugitive from justice. The hard part of the case of the hon. member for Hastings North was that Riel, having disobeyed the order of the House by not attending in his seat as required, should be expelled from the House. That order had never been served on the member for Provencher, and no attempt had been made to serve it upon him. Therefore, the House had no right to expel Riel upon this count.

He could not conceive why the amendment was brought before the House. He supposed it was moved for the purpose of embarrassing the Government. It was absurd to move such an amendment when a committee had been appointed to inquire into the question of the amnesty, and he was sure if Riel returned he would say, when he learned what had been done, "Save me from my friends."

He, himself, was in favour of an amnesty being given to Riel for two reasons. First, because the Canadian Government acknowledged the Government of Riel by receiving delegates from that Government. The second reason why he was in favour of an amnesty was that it was only a political crime that Riel was charged with. He maintained they had no right to call Riel a murderer or rebel. He constituted a provisional government under the Queen, and therefore they could not call him a rebel. He would consider that the troubles in the Northwest in which Riel took part,