

from which every communication reaches us in French as well as English, not only in the House of Commons, but also in the Senate, it naturally followed that the French language had a right to representation on the treasury benches of the Senate.

What are the principal functions of a House of Parliament? Do they not consist (1st) in discussing the Government's policy, (2nd) in expressing a judgment upon its merit, (3rd) in communicating to the Government the demands and wants of the people, as well as their own observations on all matters of public interest, (4th) in receiving for and in the name of the nation the Government's declarations? How can these observations be made to a Government, how can its policy be discussed and judgments pronounced upon it, how can demands be submitted and its communications received in a language having no representative amongst the members of that Government? The absence in the Senate of a French speaking Minister is therefore practically tantamount to the exclusion of the French language from that body. To decide that the Executive will have no French speaking representative in the Senate is therefore practically proclaiming the abolition of the French language in the Senate. It is abolishing one of the two official languages of the Confederation in one of the two Houses of Parliament; nay! in the highest Chamber, in the one whose mission is specially to protect national rights, and which is supposed to maintain the rights of that language against the possible encroachments of the lower House. It is therefore, once more, violating the spirit of the constitution.

In the present state of things five important interests are totally deprived of their right to representatives from the Senate in the Ministry.

1. The provincial interest of Quebec.
2. The national interests of the French Canadians.
3. The Catholic interests.
4. The interest of the French language.
5. The Irish interest.

I may say that this was written before we had the advantage of having Hon. Mr. Smith appointed to the Government.

It is well understood that we are now discussing a question of principle, without in the least intending to cast any disagreeable reflection on the estimable men who have represented the Government in the Senate for the last four years. Indeed we do not intend articulating the slightest complaint in the name of the religious, national or even provincial interests of Quebec, against men who, we are happy to say, are possessed of honorable and broad views, as well as of a spirit of justice—who, we have not the least doubt, are

disposed to treat us kindly, and with perfect impartiality; but we wish to affirm the rights of our Province, nationality, religion and language. The excellent disposition and the eminent personal qualities of our honorable colleagues are in the present question accidental facts, which do not give us justice. In one word, we are deprived of that to which we have a right.

I may say, hon. gentlemen, that there is nothing which is so unpleasant for us as to come back to this question, but still the members of this House will easily understand that we are not here to do what is convenient or agreeable to us; we are here to defend what we believe to be sacred rights, and I hope the hon. Ministers of the Crown and members of this body will accept in this sense the few remarks which are contained in the letter I have just read, and generally what we may say on this question. I may recognise that for the last few months the Ministry has shewn a desire to render us justice, by appointing to the Senate men who are not only a credit to this body, but who will put the Senate in a position to do that justice to us which we have been claiming during the past four years.

HON. MR. MASSON.—With a great deal that has been said by the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat I fully concur. In a Confederation such as ours, I think that the French element should as far as possible be represented in both branches of Parliament, and as I have taken the greatest share of responsibility in the formation of the French section of the Cabinet, I trust the hon. Minister of Justice will allow me to take that responsibility at the present moment. I fully believe that we should be entitled to the free use of our language, and the fact that we are entitled to the free use of our language would force the conclusion—which is not an extreme one—that we should be understood in our language, that we should be understood by the Speaker who rules over us, and that we should be understood by the Ministers who answer for us; but I think that beyond that it would be unreasonable to push our requirements,—to require for instance that, under any circumstances, whether you do good to the country or whether you do not, that you must have one Minister in this House