

an English Protestant and Sir Wilfrid Laurier a French Catholic? We know that one word or two, falling at a particular moment from the lips of a man occupying the position which the hon. gentleman then held, are more pregnant and more effective for evil than a whole tirade of religious appeals by smaller men.

It has been said, Mr. Speaker, that during the elections of 1896 the French Liberal party resorted to racial and disloyal appeals.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. BOURASSA. It has been stated that during the elections of 1896 all the French Catholics in the province of Quebec, supporting the Liberal party, appealed to the French electorate in this way: Put into power Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic, and he will certainly settle the question better than Sir Charles Tupper could, an Englishman and a Protestant. Well, during the elections of 1896 I looked after my election. I went through some of the surrounding counties and I read a good many newspaper articles. Of course, some of those articles had a bellicose tone, fully equal to that of the newspaper articles supporting hon. gentlemen opposite. But I think it would be childish for real statesmen to come here and go through all the columns of newspapers to try to prove that one party or the other held feelings that the people really never entertained and which were really never given utterance to by the leading men of either party.

Sir, what was the argument of the French Liberal candidates of the province of Quebec as to the school question. When the Bill came up for the second reading in 1896 and the leader of the opposition of that day, followed by the large majority of his party, voted against the second reading, hon. gentlemen opposite knew, and their newspapers knew, and their stump speakers knew, that the French Liberals had not voted with the intention of appealing to the racial and religious feelings of Quebec. I am not here to pass judgment on the conduct of either of the great political parties at that time. I was not a member of this House then. I may say that if I refrain from passing judgment, it is not because I am afraid to do so, but because it is useless. I am merely pointing out that the position taken by the French Liberals of Quebec was not a position that was supposed to bring them into favour with their countrymen and co-religionists. But they gave that vote, and in the campaign that followed, this was their general argument, throughout the province of Quebec: The Conservatives have been in power for six years since this question arose. During that time they did nothing until the very last session of parliament, when so short a time remained that they could not hope to secure the pas-

sage of the measure they proposed. They did this in spite of the notice and advice that had been given them as soon as in 1895 by the then Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Angers, who thought fit to leave the cabinet on that ground. He told them that whatever might be their good will, if they waited until the last session of the parliament, they would not be able to settle the question. Still, they waited until the last session, and had only three months before the time of the expiry of parliament. They knew that their Bill could not pass. The policy of the Liberal party was different. Instead of trying to take legal means that could not apply, they wanted to try by conciliation to bring the Manitoba people to settle by themselves this question which they themselves had brought into the political arena. That was the difference between the two parties. And I say that if the province of Quebec voted in favour of the Liberals on the school question, it was because the feeling prevailed in that province, and has always prevailed, that, as so often expressed by the Liberal leader, an ounce of conciliation is better than a pound of coercion. Whatever may have been the local feeling in one part of the province or the other, the broad line that differentiated the two parties throughout the province was that one tried to settle the school question by law, while the other tried to settle it by conciliation. That was the real difference.

And, speaking of racial and religious appeals, when we came back to this House and this government tried to settle the school question by conciliation with the Manitoba government, when they entered into negotiations and when the Roman Catholic supporters of this government, anxious to see that question settled, anxious to see peace established, not only in Manitoba, but in their own province, took steps to that end, what did we see? These members sent, as it was their right to send, a petition to the head of the Church, asking him to send to this country a representative of his high moral authority—not to do anything against the civil authority of this country, not to do anything against the power of the Crown, but simply to settle with the least friction the religious differences that had existed between a certain portion of the clergy of the province of Quebec and a portion of the laity. And what was the spectacle that we saw in this House? We saw members, and particularly the hon. member to whom the leader of the opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) has, this afternoon, tendered so kind a hand, telling the people that the Liberal government had appealed to the Pope of Rome to assist them in ruling this country. Sir, if ever a strong appeal to religious feeling was made in this House, since I became a member of it at least, it was in this effort to fasten a charge of disloyalty upon the Liberal party