

here a suggestion which I made on the last occasion of our choice of a Speaker—a suggestion which, I am afraid, subsequent events indicate it is not altogether unnecessary to repeat, and that is, the great importance which we ought to attach to the spontaneous and prompt repressing by the Speaker of this House of disorderly language. In this particular matter I consider that the first word is the worst word, and that the higher the quarter from which the word comes the worse the word. My hon. friend from Laval (Mr. Ouimet) has set us in his position on the floor a very admirable example in this regard, and I trust that that example which he has set us during the thirteen or fourteen years now past on the floor, he will enforce by precept when he is entrusted with the authority to which I refer. I shall not expect any weakness in the discharge of this duty on his part, but rather shall hope for the best. The hon. gentleman has referred to the parliamentary career of my hon. friend. I have watched it with interest and not without sympathy. I have observed in him at times efforts which I deemed to be in the right direction in the discharge of his duty as a Canadian citizen. I have observed in him aspirations towards that interpretation of the Federal pact to which I adhere, and aspirations towards the development of our powers, for example, of dealing with our relations with other countries, in which I have entirely coincided with him. If I were disposed to be critical I might say there have been occasions upon which it appeared to me he hardly pushed his principles fully into action, that he did not carry to their full logical development the views which he entertained. But I trust that, fortified and ripened by experience in the position which he is about to occupy for the next few years, we may find—if there be that blemish—that blemish entirely removed when he retakes his place on the floor. My hon. friend has at times been rather a disturbing element in the party ranks. I recollect very well when to him was ascribed a somewhat prominent part in the extraordinary convolutions which were performed by the Figure 8 some years ago in the neighborhood of this Chamber. To him is ascribed, not the authorship indeed, but the application—as illustrative of the relations of his friends of that time in the Administration to his colleagues from his Province—of the phrase “*à quat’ pattes, Canayens*,” and to him is ascribed, encouraged no doubt and inspired from a quarter still higher and nearer to the Administration than himself, that resistance which resulted in the submission of the Minister—in his placing himself “*à quat’ pattes* before the *Canayens*,” and entering Room No. 8 under the Caudine forks. I hope there never may be occasion to say of him that he illustrated in his own person the application of the phrase; that it never may be said of him that he was “*à quat’ pattes*”—that he marched from mutiny to ministerial favor, or touched the Treasury by treason. I hope it never may be said of him that he attained, or could retain this Chair by anything approaching to base subserviency or abandonment of principle. For my part, I feel special pleasure in acceding to this particular choice on this particular occasion. We are just now come from a very severe election campaign, in which the chief Tory slogan and battle-cry against myself was my vote on the execution of Riel and my opinion of the management of North-West affairs. I was called on to express an opinion on that subject, which I did in this place about twelve months ago, when I declared that in my opinion the execution of Riel was a severe blow to the administration of criminal justice in Canada, a cruel act which I felt ought to be regretted. I knew that that opinion was unpopular. I knew that it was not shared by many of my own friends. I knew it was perilous of utterance and that it was liable to misinterpretation. I asked only that I should be allowed to be sincere and honest in the expression of my convictions. But the Tory party declined to permit that position.

Mr. BLAKE.

They declared that no honest man, no jurist, no parliamentarian, no statesman, could honestly believe that which I, as they said, professed to believe. They declared that I was setting up the French above the English, the Roman Catholics above the Protestants—that I was breaking down the sacred rule of one law for all, that I was raising the cry of race and revenge, that I was destroying the prime principle of the administration of criminal justice. They roused the Orange Tories to madness. I was insulted in the press, in the pulpit, on the platform. I was called a Rielite, a conspirator against Canadian law, a hypocrite and coward, a knave, a fool, a rebel and a traitor. And as to the Half-breeds, the Tories declared that there was no neglect, no delay, no mismanagement on the part of the Government—that, on the contrary, all was kindness, promptness, diligence and wisdom; that the accusation was false, and the accuser a calumniator. A year ago, discussing these questions here, I appealed to a later day—to the next generation—for my final verdict, and the judgment of history recorded by posterity. Who, at that time, could have believed that within these few months I should find these, my accusers, to-day laying the first stone of my vindication. What is the earliest step which they propose to this Assembly, elected largely under the influence of those cries? They propose for the first place here, for the position of Speaker and mouthpiece of the Canadian Commons, for the vindicator of our privileges, for our judicial arbiter, the gentleman who voted with me a few months ago:

“That this House feels it its duty to express its deep regret that the sentence of death passed upon Louis Riel, convicted of high treason, was allowed to be carried into execution.”

They propose for that high office the gentleman who a few months ago followed up that vote by voting with me

“That it was the duty of the Government to proceed with diligence, under the authority they obtained from Parliament in 1879, to settle the claims arising out of the Indian title of the Half-breeds of the North-West Territories, and also to settle the claims of those of the Manitoba Half-breeds who were temporarily absent during the enumeration, and that in this respect the Government has been guilty of neglect, delay and mismanagement, prejudicial to the peace, welfare and good government of Canada.”

These votes of censure on the part of the hon. member for Laval do give him a title to my support. These votes of want of confidence in the Administration do lead me to the conclusion that he possesses a soundness of judgment which I hope he will illustrate in the duties of the Chair. But what is to be said of the men who called me Rielite and conspirator—nay, even fool, hypocrite and coward, calumniator, traitor and rebel, because I so voted, and who propose to elevate to the first place in this Chamber the gentleman who shared in the votes with me? Is this the application of the principle of one law for all? Is this the administration of even-handed justice—highest honors for one, execration and contempt for the other? Are they acting thus in spite of the hon. member's votes? If so, it proves that the votes cannot have been so very bad after all. But they are not so acting; they are acting so largely because of the votes. We know, and no one knows better than the hon. member, that he largely owes his elevation at this juncture to the fact that he occupies the happy position of having voted to condemn the execution of Louis Riel and the conduct of the Government with reference to Half-breed affairs. It is because of the votes largely, and not in spite of them, that this motion is made. Tell it not, Mr. Bourinot, on the 12th of July; name it not in the lodges of the Orangemen; but so it is; and such being the situation, I extend in advance my hearty congratulations to my fellow Rielite, to my co-conspirator against Canadian law, to my brother knave and fool, my fellow-hypocrite and traitor, my associate in calumny, treason and rebellion, on being about to receive, by the unanimous vote of the Canadian Commons, the position of first commoner of Canada. Motion agreed to.