

# EVENTS

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## *The Big Debate Closes.*

**T**HE debate in the House of Commons at Ottawa on the motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to read the Autonomy Bill the second time was brought to a close on Wednesday night by the taking of the vote.

The motion was made on March 23, so that the debate was spread over six weeks.

One of the features of the debate was the element of doubt as to how some members on both sides were going to vote. For instance on Monday evening Mr. McIntyre, the Liberal member for South Perth, spoke for a very long time and almost everybody was in doubt as to his attitude. If the constitutionality of the education clause was submitted to the Privy Council in England, he would feel free to vote for the bill. He had no hesitation in declaring against the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Forget, a Conservative member, spoke from the Opposition benches the same night and declared that his leader, Mr. R. L. Borden, had made a mistake in the course he had taken in this matter and announced his intention of voting for the bill. He

pointed out that in the province of Quebec the largest concessions had been made to the English-speaking portion as regards representation in the Legislature and in the cabinet, where out of seven members he had seen three English-speaking Protestants. The important portfolio of treasurer of Quebec was held by an English-speaking Protestant. The newly elected Speaker of the House of Assembly at Quebec was an English Protestant. Mr. Forget believed that we should all be Canadians and that questions of race and religion should not be forced on our attention. Personally he preferred that the school system for the new provinces should be the same as in Ontario and Quebec.

The debate was raised from the rut into which it had fallen by a splendid speech from the Minister of Justice, Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick, shortly before the division was taken. He put the issue squarely in regard to the education clause as between Roman Catholics and Protestants in this country. He recalled the fact that the Roman Catholics had written many pages of