

House of Commons Debates

THIRD SESSION—TENTH PARLIAMENT

SPEECH

OF

MR. HENRI BOURASSA, M.P.

ON

IMMIGRATION

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 1907.

Mr. HENRI BOURASSA (Labelle). The hon. Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) has grown eloquent to a degree seldom known in this House. It is one of the first times that I have noticed that hon. gentleman abandoning the stern path of logic to adopt the high-toned and not well defined way of grandiloquence in order to avoid a straight issue. I was surprised, more especially at one of the statements of the hon. gentleman, when he said that the speech of my hon. friend (Mr. Armand Lavergne)—which to him seemed to have lasted an hour and a half, whilst in fact it was only three-quarters of an hour—was full of inaccuracies, and that in his hour and a quarter speech he has not found it proper to dispel any of these so-called inaccuracies. Before reviewing the speech of the hon. gentleman, I will remind the House of some of the facts stated by the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Armand Lavergne) which the minister has not deigned to refute.

The hon. member stated that the North Atlantic Trading Company's contract had been made by the government as a change from the policy of paying bonuses to booking agents, and that, according to the declaration made last year by the minister himself, this has been stated by the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Armand Lavergne), and not refuted or denied by the minister.

The hon. member for Montmagny stated that the policy of paying bonuses had proved, under the operation of the North

Atlantic Trading Company, to be a failure. This has not only not been denied, but it has been admitted and ratified by the minister.

The hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Armand Lavergne) stated that the policy of paying bonuses to immigrants had a tendency to bring a bad instead of a good class of immigrants. This has not been denied, but reiterated as a reason for the cancelling of the contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company.

The hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Armand Lavergne) stated that the system was a bad one. The minister has not denied the fact; he has simply tried to evade the issue by saying that this system was no longer in existence under the present order in council. The minister has tried to quibble with words by stating that there was no contract; but when a question was put to him by the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Armand Lavergne) he was obliged to admit that, under this order in council, he would enter into a tacit contract with booking agents. Instead of making the case better, it simply makes it worse; because the people of Canada are sick of tacit contracts, secret contracts; what they want is a fixed, determined and public policy in immigration as well as in anything else.

The hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Armand Lavergne) stated that the result of such a policy was to bring a large number of people into this country whom we could not assimilate. The minister has not