

is aimed in this campaign." Well, Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding these appeals, the electors of St. Hyacinthe voted against him and against his candidate. My hon. friend is too attached to his party and to the little coterie which from what has been called "the flaming corner (*coin flamant*)" pulls the wire which works the party in St. Hyacinthe, and the despotism practised by the coterie has brought upon the hon. member the loss of many a devoted partisan who refused to blindly follow the lead of the men who compose this secret committee. The political programme of the hon. member and his party is alone answerable for the decline in his popularity.

Mr. RINFRET. (Translation.) Yes, a great decline, when at the last election he was returned by 500 majority.

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) He did not get 500 majority, and he would be defeated if he ran again.

Mr. RINFRET. (Translation.) It was 490 majority which he got; not very far from 500.

Mr. DUPONT. (Translation.) The hon. member for Lotbinière in very touchy to-day. He cannot allow me to give my views. We have listened with much calmness to the remarks of the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe and his friends of the left, and yet we cannot express our views upon this Bill without being interrupted whenever we touch one of their tender spots. The hon. member for St. Hyacinthe has brought no new argument into the debate. He simply asked why his county was disturbed? I said from the beginning, and we do not cease repeating it, the counties having the standard population are only disturbed in order that other counties may also be given the required population. A great crime was made of the Government disturbing the habits of the electors. It is said: "But the electors are used to voting with this or that group, and it would be cruel to count their votes with the neighbouring county." Well, I ask, where is the cruelty? And where is the disturbance of the electors transferred from one county to another? Even though a county be divided by a river, are the electors obliged to cross that river to deposit their ballots in the box? Assuredly not. The electors of St. Antoine and St. Marc will vote in their usual respective polling districts, and after the voting the boxes will be taken to the city of St. Hyacinthe for the counting of the votes. That is all. One must be very short of arguments to bring such paltry ones against the Bill. As to the county meetings, they do not take place in the town of St. Hyacinthe, but at La Présentation. In the future these county meetings will simply have to be held in what will be a more central locality. I notice, Mr. Chairman, that my hon. friend from Verchères (Mr. Geoffrion), who is not the least able man of this House, has sought to excite the sympathies over the fate brought upon him by this Bill. I believe that everybody in this House sympathizes with him. The hon. members of the left say: "You wipe out the county of an old Liberal chief, of a man who has rendered services to his party and his country, and that is bad, that is an act of tyranny." I do not deny, Mr. Chairman, the usefulness to his party of the hon. member for Verchères. I am one of those who would like to see him come back here, and I say so with the greatest sincerity.

Among all our political opponents there is no man more courteous. But, on the other hand, if my hon. friends of the left have as much esteem as we have for this veteran of politics, they will necessarily return him from the county now called Richelieu, and to which are to be annexed the parishes of Verchères—Ste. Julie, Ste. Theodosie and Contre-cœur; the two last parishes will in the future be for the Liberal party the keystone of the County of Richelieu. My hon. friend from Richelieu (Mr. Bruneau) is a young man. I am confident that he has no great interest in entering politics for the present. I know that he is only in through necessity, and to serve what from his point of view seems to be the interests of his party. Well, the hon. member for Verchères is not deprived of his county. He can in the future represent the constituency of Richelieu, which the Government might call Verchères, if it pleases my hon. friends of the left better. But why urge such considerations against a measure of public interests? Why, on mere questions of details—because such a member is inconvenienced by the measure, because such other does not care to give up the voters of such a parish—why, I say, for considerations like these, interfere with the *ensemble* of a measure, which in my opinion, is conceived in the public interest, since it secures for the majority of the electors the majority of the representatives in this House?

Mr. BERNIER. (Translation.) I have no intention to make a second speech on the subject which I treated this morning. I only take the floor with the object of rectifying certain errors made by the hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Dupont). The hon. member has taken to task the petitions signed by the electors of St. Pie and St. Dominique, asking that these parishes be left in the County of Bagot, and he insinuated that if I was not the one who had originated those petitions, it must have been my hon. friend (Mr. Brodeur). It seems to me that the hon. member made a poor compliment to the electors of these two parishes, Liberals as well as Conservatives, who signed those petitions. It was natural that these citizens, threatened with being thrown into Rouville, should think of taking measures to prevent the annexation of these parishes, to the neighbouring county. There was no need of their going to St. Hyacinthe, or anywhere, for information before understanding what were their interests. As to the remark made by the hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Dupont) that these petitions were signed by the same hand, it is possible, Mr. Chairman, that they might have been signed by the same person; the hon. member knows perfectly well that under such circumstances a great regard for regularity does not always obtain. But I would like to know whether the hon. member for Bagot (Mr. Dupont) means to say that those that have written down those names have done it without the desire and will of the parties. The persons who prepared these petitions and caused them to be signed are honourable people, and I know there is not a single man among them so unscrupulous as to dare do what the hon. member insinuated. Should he have had counter-petitions he could have given his insinuations much more weight. These remarks apply likewise to the petition from the electors of Ste. Magdeleine, it is possible that on it also names may appear to have been written by the same hand, but this does not