

Hon. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX (Postmaster General). Mr. Speaker, it is with a deep sense of emotion that I now rise to give my earnest support to what I believe to be one of the most important pieces of legislation that has ever been introduced into this parliament, since it has been in existence. I hope I will be brief in the remarks which I intend to offer, I hope I will be clear and that I will treat this subject, not with levity, but with the gravity which it imposes upon one. Sir, I have listened with great pleasure to the speeches which have already been delivered by my right hon. friend, the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and by my hon. friend the member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). I have listened to what has been said and I believe that as regards the policy of the government, no clearer, no more eloquent statement could be made than the one which was made this afternoon by the Prime Minister of Canada. Let me say, in justice to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, with whom I may differ, that he has placed himself squarely before the House, and that he has presented in a concrete form, the policy of his party. I have listened courteously, I believe, to the statement which has just been made by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier, who represents one wing of the Conservative opposition. I say that I have listened courteously to him, as I always do. I can never forget one thing. When my hon. friend speaks, I always remember that he was my old professor at Laval University, and I owe him the courtesy which a pupil owes to his professor. I did not interrupt him when he began his remarks and he should have spared me his sneers when he referred to a knighthood dangling before the eyes of the Postmaster General. Mr. Speaker, remember that this is intended for Quebec consumption; it is not for Ontario consumption. I have only this to say in answer to my hon. friend that he might have offered to his pupil a little more of the milk of human kindness and a little less of the cup of bitterness. Sir, I am a reformer, I do not belong to the party which by divine right is called upon to govern all the peoples of this world. I am a reformer, I am a plain man. Unlike my hon. friend, I am not a seigneur, no blue blood about me. Speaking as such, as belonging to that vast army of common people so well described by the late Abraham Lincoln as the race beloved of God, since they were so numerous on the face of the earth—yes, as a plain man and a reformer, with the deep sense of the duty which devolves on me on the present occasion, let me say to my hon.

Mr. MONK.

friend that if, forsooth, I am a knight, I am a knight of labour, nothing more and nothing else. And when I shall have said this evening what I intend saying, my language may be repeated in the smallest hamlet of the province of Quebec. And whether in the province of Quebec or in any of the other provinces, I will tell to the face of my hon. friend, who indulges in sneers at my expense, that let my right hand forget its cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if ever I sell my birthright and that of my fellow countrymen for a mess of pottage.

Sir, we had a right to expect that, on a question of this importance, the two great traditional parties in this parliament would have given to the people of Canada an example of union. This is a matter of the gravest interest, and after the resolution which was adopted unanimously on the 29th March, 1909, one would have expected that we would have united on the principle of a Canadian navy. But the right hon. the Prime Minister and the Liberals have on this, as on other questions, to face the same old opposition. 'Too much' my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) will shout to his faithful electors at Lachine, 'too much' will he shout to the electors of Gaspé, when I suppose he will represent me as being a slave of the King and as having sold myself to His Excellency the Governor General for a knighthood; 'too much' will he shout in the province of Quebec. 'Not enough,' my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden) will say in Ontario; 'not enough' will he shout in the English provinces of the Dominion. Sir, it is the privilege of the Liberal party to aim always at a happy medium and to steer through the shoals a middle course in questions of this nature. Of course, the loyalty of that party is always impeached when a policy of this kind is presented before the electors. This reminds me of what happened at the time of the French revolution when that famous lady, Madame Roland, was brought to the guillotine. On her way, as she passed before the statue of liberty, she bowed reverentially, and turning to the people, exclaimed: O Liberty how many crimes are committed in thy name! Could we not with equal reason exclaim, when we hear those shrieks of loyalty from hon. gentlemen opposite: O Loyalty, what many crimes are committed in thy name! Sir, who would seriously impeach the loyalty of the leader of the Liberal party or that of the vast majority of Canadians, who to-day compose the reform party? Were we disloyal when in 1897, of our own free will, as the first act of the Liberal administration, we granted to Great Britain what is called the British preference? At the time of the