

Mr. GAGNON: Will my hon. friend allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. BOULANGER: With pleasure.

Mr. GAGNON: I observe that he has studied the regional history of his district closely. Is it not true that Rivière-Boyer formed part of the county of Bellechasse, in 1867?

Mr. BOULANGER: No. The line which divided the counties of Dorchester and Lévis prior to 1853, and which since then separates the counties of Lévis and Bellechasse, was never altered. It is the easterly line of the Lauzon seigniory, and no area of the Lauzon seigniory ever formed part of the county of Bellechasse. This line has remained unchanged since 1791.

Of course, I am speaking from memory, I have no notes before me, but I do not believe my hon. friend from Dorchester can contradict me on this point.

To return to what I was saying a moment ago, here are people who never had anything in common, since almost two hundred years, with the county of Bellechasse, who are told by way of consolation: "You are not losing your vote!" One thing must be borne in mind, the vote of those people in the county of Bellechasse, is merely one more drop of water in the ocean. It will have practically no influence in this county which normally gives a large majority to the Liberals. But, in the county of Lévis, for instance, their vote could be much more effective; it would be sufficient to defeat the Conservative candidate.

Mr. CASGRAIN: The Conservatives want to avoid that.

Mr. BOULANGER: Those people have a right to cast a vote where it will be of most value, where it will be most effective, and there is no reason why they should be denied the pleasure they would experience in contributing effectively to the defeat of the Government candidate.

I asked myself, for instance, what my hon. friend, the member for Montmagny, would say, if his argument were invoked to console the people of the county of Russell,—if, perchance, it were to disappear—this was strongly mooted, for being denied the right, privilege and satisfaction of electing a representative of their race and language to the House of Commons. I wonder if it would be a great satisfaction to them, should their constituency disappear, were the hon. member for Montmagny to go to them and say: "What is the use of you being distressed be-

[Mr. Boulanger.]

cause you are losing your county and the right to elect one of your people, you will vote just the same!"

I am sure the hon. member for Montmagny did not give it a thought. He never intended being so cynical and brutal when he submitted the following argument to the house: "It matters little where the people vote so long as they vote; what difference does it make whether they vote on this side of the river or on the other side, on this side of a tree rather than on the other side."

The counties form a large family, as already stated, they like to vote for somebody they know. Take the case of the five or six parishes that are annexed to Bellechasse. They will be like strangers in the midst of the population of old Bellechasse; they will almost feel they are mingling with unknown people. It is evident they will not have much say in the selection of the candidate at the next election. That candidate will be selected by the population of the old county and he will be a man which these newcomers will scarcely know. Thus they will be only a comparatively negligible quantity both with respect to the selection of the candidate and the vote they will cast, since it is only a matter of adding a few hundred additional votes to the already large Liberal majority in the county of Bellechasse.

I do not discuss this from a personal standpoint or from the standpoint of the person who will be the Liberal candidate at the next election in the county of Bellechasse. I consider the matter simply from the viewpoint of the people to whom the counties which they inhabit belong.

The people should have something to say in regard to alterations of county boundaries. They are not mere cattle that can be bartered on the public square; they are not a common herd which the government or its supporters can push to the right or to the left, unite or amalgamate according to their fancy. The government consulted nobody. It did not even consult the present representative of the county of Bellechasse in respect of the additions it proposed to make to this constituency, neither were the parties to be annexed consulted.

I do not want my hon. friend, the member for Dorchester, or other opponents, to place a wrong construction on my words. I said a moment ago, that I had asked for nothing, that I had not solicited additions to my constituency, that I made no bargain with any person and that I had agreed to nothing. I do not want my words to be interpreted as