

"Mr. Vanasse spoke a second time, and then Mr. Ernest Tremblay of Saint Hyacinthe—not he who took part in the meeting held in this town on Saturday last, spoke in the interest of the Liberal cause.

"While we do not always approve of the political opinions of Mr. Tremblay, there is one thing, nevertheless, which we approve of as regards him, and which it is a pleasure and a duty for us to state, viz., his courteous manner of discussing. The polished language made use of yesterday by Mr. Tremblay, contrasted, indeed, remarkably with the ill tempered words and trivial and gross expressions of the young damagogue, Lemieux. The audience showed that they knew how to distinguish between a well educated man and a scape-grace."

I am ashamed, Mr. Speaker, to reproduce here remarks that are too flattering to me. I keenly regret being obliged to do so; and if, which, God forbid, I should happen to retain any resentment against my honorable accuser, it will be because he has obliged me to make this display of the encomiums that have been lavished on me.

Here then are two members of our staff who understand, in the same way as I do, the duties of their position. On the occasion referred to the Ministry were attacked and defended by two parties in the same employment respectively. I pity my excellent colleague if he be subjected to the same annoyance as I have been, and if there be found among his enemies in the representative body any who will ask for his dismissal, alleging that his presence within the precincts of the House is for them a nuisance to which there could be no right to subject them any more than the Honorable Secretary of State.

The truth is that we have all, or almost all, taken part in the struggle. We had the right to do so in defence of our individual opinions. For, if the right to concern ourselves openly about public affairs does not imply the privilege of combatting the Ministerial policy as it embraces that of defending and extolling it, it is a bitter mockery, unworthy of the House of Commons and of us. I shall not contend that there may not have escaped us, in our speeches or our writings, words which must have appeared violent to certain representatives more sensitive than others. But such has been the case on both sides, and it occurred necessarily in consequence of the undeniable right which, I trust, I have established as being recognized in the most formal manner. Happy are they who, in the heat of fight, were never guilty of any aberration by word or pen! But it must be borne in mind, Sir, that the struggles outside the precincts of the Legislature resemble not those which take place on the floor of the House of Commons, where there exists only liberty of speech, whilst, outside, this liberty is doubled by the emancipation of language.

And who, indeed, could claim authority—infallible authority for saying: "Thus far shall you go, and no farther"? If we may hope ever to find the being worthy to formulate the vocabulary of euphonisms within the circle whereof we must perpetually girate, it appears to me that we must search somewhere else than in the ranks of our adversaries for that angel of equanimity. Our right being as formal as it is manifest, the exercise of it must be left entirely to our discretion, otherwise it ceases to be a right. If there be defamation of persons, let the courts of law judge; but virulence is not defamation. My accuser reproaches me with having written, in 1885, a pamphlet, conceived in an ardent tone at a time of general effervescence, when more than one frigid temperament was raised to melting heat. I shall not be guilty of such indecency as to express any appreciation of my own work, the time for discussing it is passed. There has been a Session of Parliament since it appeared. Nobody has taken occasion to reproach me with it; and now I appeal to prescription. If the members of the present Parliament set about taking revenge for pretended insults offered to members of a former Parliament, it will be because they decline to follow the example of King Louis XII, who declared that the King of France should not resent the insults offered to the Duke of Orleans. You will say, perhaps, that I am a stickler for distinctions. This is a fault which it appears to me is not always out of place, and I venture to indulge in it on this occasion, and say, that those amongst us who are charged with violence of language