

given to the Postmaster-General any instructions to take the line of remark to which I have now called the attention of the House; and, secondly, whether, not having given it, as I am satisfied is the fact, not even having any such inclination, he now approves of the substance of those remarks, or of the good taste, good judgment, and statesmanship of the Hon. Postmaster-General in making this utterance. These are the questions to which I desire to call the attention of the First Minister and of the House.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE.—My hon. friend from Chateauguay only mentioned a minute or two ago that he intended to put some questions to me, and I was not aware of their precise nature. He has put it specifically—whether the Postmaster-General had any conversation with me before leaving to take part in the election at Argenteuil regarding that particular passage of his speech? Well, Sir, if we had any conversation upon any subject affecting the Administration's policy in any way, I should say at once I would not under any circumstances mention anything about that conversation. It so happens, however, that we had no conversation about that or any other subject affecting the policy of the Administration, and that I was not aware of what subjects my hon. friend intended to speak upon. In fact, I did not know that he would go to Argenteuil at all. He went to Montreal on other business, and proceeded there as a political friend of the hon. gentleman who is now Member for the county. As to the second question—whether I approve of the speech, I have simply to say that I do not approve of anything that has a tendency to bring religion into public discussion in the politics of this country. I have a very strong opinion myself as an old Liberal, that as far as it is possible to do so, questions relating to Churches should be entirely separated from any discussion that may arise in Parliament. I am a believer, Sir, in the entire independence of each church, no matter by what name it may be called, and I am a believer in having Parliament in this country relieved from the discussion of any subject which may provoke reference to any religious

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questions. I think that is the right course to pursue, and, as I remarked in a published letter, the constitution of the country is eminently favorable to that procedure being carried out. I can only, therefore, express my regret at the remarks of my hon. friend, and the tone and interpretation given to them by many. So far as that interpretation and tone are concerned I have no sympathy with it, nor have I taken any part in public affairs which would at all involve my entering into a discussion on these subjects. I hope I have sufficiently expressed my own views as a member of the Administration. I believe that every Member of this House has a perfect right to discuss politically in his own Province local questions which may come up, that he may consider it a duty to do so, and that for their share in any such discussions members of this House are not to be held responsible here. With regard to the views enunciated by my hon. friend, the Postmaster-General, in his published letter, addressed to Mr. Power, of Halifax, in which he explained that he did not design any attack upon the Catholic Church in his speech, I have no doubt that this was the case, because I have too much faith in his own generous disposition, and correct appreciation of the public affairs of this country to believe that he could be a party to a desire to assail any religious denomination in the country. I hope Sir, that my hon. friend from Chateauguay is entirely satisfied with the explanation I have given.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON.—In reply to my hon. friend, the First Minister, I will say that I am entirely satisfied as to the good faith of his exposition of his own views, as they are my own views, but I venture to remind my hon. friend, that there is a solidarity of responsibility among Ministers, and that the declarations or utterances of private members of the House, or of private citizens, come within a very different category from the utterances upon public questions of Ministers of the Crown, especially when these utterances are clinched with the strong declaration that these opinions are shared by his Party, and that if they were not, that he could have no further