

right hon. Prime Minister, had performed the most remarkable political somersaults of modern times. Professional acrobats must have turned pale with envy at the news of such a feat. After several times, in Great Britain, in Halifax, in Ottawa, declaring in favour of a Canadian navy, he changed his mind, and opposed such a proposal on the ground of its inefficiency, condemning particularly that clause of the Bill which gave to the Canadian Government control over the naval forces.

His supporters stated one after the other that the establishment of such a navy would lead to the independence of Canada, and the hon. member for Frontenac managed, during the debate, in the hope of hurting the leader of the Liberal party, to insult the public men of the province of Quebec. The Bill was carried, but the campaign initiated in Parliament was carried on throughout the country, a campaign of slander and double dealing. In the province of Quebec falsehoods and appeals to prejudice were let loose and ran amuck under our eyes. But always and everywhere, in Drummond and Arthabaska and in other parts as well, the proposal which this Government has since introduced was condemned as violently as the proposed establishment of a Canadian navy.

Mr. hon. friend from L'Islet (Mr. Pâquet) stated at Montmagny, on September 18, 1910:

It would be a national crime to adopt a policy which would lead us to neglect the development of the country's resources for the purpose of building a fleet to wage war over every sea.

At Cape St. Ignace, my hon. friend the member for Montmagny exclaimed:

If there had been twenty-five French Canadians to vote against the navy, that scheme would never have been passed. The same might be said of Mr. Borden's proposal. And that is what will happen at the next session, if you only elect twenty-five independent men who are devoted to your interests.

I might quote the vehement protests, the fiery utterances of the hon. Minister of Inland Revenue, of the Secretary of State and of nearly all the members of the province of Quebec who sit on your right, Mr. Speaker. I shall not weary the House with such extracts. Besides, it would be too much cruelty on our part, following on the excitement these gentlemen have been submitted to of late, to remind them of their forgotten policies and repudiated pledges. Further opportunities for doing so will be at hand.

During the session of 1910-1911, following on the memorable campaign in Drummond and Arthabaska, the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) introduced the following motion:

The House regrets that the Speech from the Throne does not indicate any intention

Mr. LAPOINTE (Kamouraska).

on the part of the Government to consult the people in connection with the naval policy and the general question of the contribution of Canada to the defence of the Empire.

Mr. Speaker, the whole Conservative party, as represented in this House, supported that amendment. I shall not recall the incidents of the electoral campaign of 1911. Deceit and slander were given a freer course than ever before. The most irreconcilable sections, extreme Imperialists on the one side, and unbending autonomists on the other, extremists of all shades, worked hand in hand to overthrow the Liberal party.

You know, Sir, with what skill and shrewdness, with what consummate ability were prepared those elections which ensured to the Conservative party that majority made up of men holding the most contradictory views, and within whose ranks there is no union possible without the utter breaking by many of their most solemn pledges.

That hybrid alliance was victorious, and in the evening of election day 'Le Devoir,' of the Nationalist leader Bourassa, and the 'News,' of the Imperialist leader Willison, exchanged their congratulations and publicly embraced one another under the gaze of the country.

Then the spoils had to be divided, and the hon. Postmaster General (Mr. Pelletier) appeared on the scene. I cannot help in fairness to the Prime Minister acknowledging that he made an excellent choice. He needed a man with an open mind, that would be capable of modifying his views through the study of public questions, and the hon. gentleman's ability, as well as his previous political somersaults, qualified him in an eminent degree for the post assigned to him. I am very much reminded by that hon. gentleman of that old veteran, who, in, I forget what novel, is represented as carrying his rifle to the left shoulder, when tired of resting it on the right.

Before displacing his rifle from one shoulder to the other, the hon. minister made some public statements. He spoke at Lorette, at Montmagny and elsewhere, proclaiming himself the faithful follower of the member for Jacques-Cartier and promising a plebiscite and even something better.

The electors of the province of Quebec were impatiently awaiting the opening of the newly elected Parliament. On every public hustling, in front of all the churches, hon. gentlemen on the other side and their friends had vowed to heaven that if the Laurier Government were defeated, the Navy Bill, that cursed bill, would be struck from the statutes at the very beginning of the session. Then it was that disenchantment started in. Not only did the Government not propose the repeal of the Navy Bill, but not one of the members elected as