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HON. G. E. FOSTER

Continued from page 2.

Mr. Foster—Will my hon. friend (Mr. Brodeur) rise in his place and deny that such a letter was written by Mr. Russell?

Mr. Brodeur—I put a fair question to the hon. gentleman. He said it was a return which had been brought down to the Senate and he thus implied that it was brought down by the government. I ask him is it a return?

Mr. Foster—And I found it was not a return, and I stated where it was to be found and what it was. But the point is not whether it was a return, or an answer to a question, or from a statement made by a senator—the point is: Was that letter written by the right hon. gentleman as read? If it was not written by him the right hon. gentleman can now rise and deny it.

Was the other letter which I have read written by his accredited and instructed representative, for whose expenses the Canadian public treasury paid? Was it written by him or was it not? If the right hon. gentleman will deny it, then that settles the controversy; but he does not deny it.

Mr. Fitzpatrick—I do not know anything about the letters my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) has referred to, but I do know that Mr. Russell's expenses were not paid by the Canadian public.

Mr. Foster—If my hon. friend says they were not so paid, I cheerfully take that statement back, and I am very glad to do so.

Mr. Fielding—Why was it suggested?

Mr. Bureau—What did you make the assertion for?

Mr. Foster—I have heard assertions made in this House.

Mr. Bureau—By you.

Mr. Foster—By gentlemen on both sides of the House as to which, as soon as they were informed were not true, they immediately accepted the denial. However, it is undeniable that Mr. Russell received money from this government, but it may have been for other services, and as the Minister of Justice says it was not for this service. I unreservedly accept that statement.

Taking these letters as being genuine, and there is no doubt about it, I think we have found thus far in our analysis that the present Papal ablegate was not brought here and is here to-day on account of spiritual difficulties that have arisen in the Catholic church of Canada.

Mr. Bergeron—Nor asked for by the bishops or clergy of Canada.

Mr. Foster—This also is suggested to me: that it is not on record and cannot be substantiated, that such a personage was asked for by the bishops and the clergy of the Roman Catholic church in this Dominion of Canada. If that is wrong, it is quite in order for those who know all about it to deny that assumption; but as it is not denied, it goes to strengthen the analysis I am making, and the conclusion that the consequence of the only reason for the ablegate being asked to come, and being here today, is in order to help the Reform government out of difficulties into which they had got themselves, and to help them out of that confusion and trouble by the intervention of a higher dignitary of the church. This House and this country will know in a moment whether that inference is a violent one or a fair one.

Why, in the whole tenor of those letters, the right hon. gentleman and the accredited agents, there is no assumption that he has come here for spiritual or church purposes. It is all put on the basis of political difficulties. What were the difficulties he was to settle? If they had put it honestly in black and white, they would have said: the difficulties between Reformers and Conservatives, and we want a high dignitary of the church to come here and help us to smooth out those political difficulties.

But there is another very singular thing which Mr. Russell put into that statement of his to His Eminence, that is, that his sending, including the right hon. gentleman who leads the government, writing in 1897, after the right hon. gentleman had declared that he had settled satisfactorily the Manitoba school question, had instructed Mr. Russell to remind His Holiness through His Eminence that they did not pretend to believe that the bishops were perfect, but they begged His Holiness to take them as the beginning of justice. Now, sir, is that straightforward conduct? The right hon. gentleman, I said, is paying for his tortuous policy. So he is. In 1896 he saw a bridge by which he could get into power; he was anxious to cross the bridge; he threw his principles, the constitutional principles on which he had prided himself so much, to the winds; he also threw to the winds his solicitude for the Catholic minority in Manitoba; and after he had crossed the bridge by a promise to more than one half of this Dominion, he was the champion of provincial rights, and by a promise to the forty one per cent which has been referred to in this House that he would give them something more and better than the Tupper government could give by the Remedial Bill, and attained power by these means, he negotiated privately or publicly with the Manitoba government, and then announced to the country that he had settled the question. As an honorable statesman, he ought to have settled it. The Manitoba government came to him and said: this is our utmost concession; and if he, as the Prime Minister of this country, took it as their utmost concession, why should he send an agent to Rome, to say to His Holiness: I do not offer this concession as a perfect settlement; it is only the beginning of justice; send out your highest dignitary to reside permanently in Ottawa, so that, by insistence, by methods proper in themselves from our standpoint, he can bring to bear a tireless, relentless pressure, in times of party stress, in time of provincial trouble, when a government has a small support, may be to tide them over, or when they are exceedingly anxious to get their rights in point of territory, he shall be in a position to use the influence which he knows so well how to use, and at the proper time this beginning of justice may blossom out into the perfect fulfillment of separate schools for the province of Manitoba. That is why Monseigneur Sbarretti is here today. If it had not been for that reason and that method of conduct, he would not be here today. What futile reasoning for the right hon. gentleman, after thirty years of political

battle, to get up and make this kind of defence before this country, and think it will go down with the people: Monseigneur Sbarretti did what he was brought here to do; did what I asked him to be sent here for; did what I sent an agent to Rome to get him appointed to do; he did it; but he had no authority from here to deliver the goods. Does the right hon. gentleman see the two horns of his dilemma? You brought him here; you have kept him here for those five or ten years; you brought him for those purposes; and when he comes to the final, crucial point, and uses his influence, you disown him. If that is cowardice, then let it go by its imputation.

But my right hon. friend does worse than that. He gets up before this House and this country, and says: "If Monseigneur Sbarretti made that promise of an extension of the boundaries of Manitoba as a political consideration to the province of Manitoba for those two proposed amendments; he did it without any authority or any well-grounded hope that we would supplement his promise. Come now, I will put a question to my right hon. friend. I suppose that Monseigneur Sbarretti had got those two amendments made in the Manitoba law, and then had come to you and told you what he had done, and had read the whole of that correspondence, giving the raison d'être of his being here, would you have refused to implement it? There is a question for my right hon. friend, I will put another, which is more trenchant still: When you say that Monseigneur Sbarretti held out a political promise to the envoys from Manitoba, and that he had no right to do it, what estimate do you place on Monseigneur Sbarretti yourself? I refuse to believe that a high dignitary of the church, such as Monseigneur Sbarretti is, a man of his training and his parts, would by a trick endeavour to get two amendments for his co-religionists in the Manitoba school law, unless he knew that if they were granted, the other thing would be along with it—ways and crooked paths the right hon. gentleman is forcing himself now, as a result of his misdeeds, to tread, with sorrow and humiliation."

Now, Sir, I have no more to say on this question at the present time, except to reiterate again that my right hon. friend may take this and keep it, that the people of Canada demand that there shall be no plausible alliance between church and state in this country. A bishop of the Methodist church has no more right to be consulted than a layman of the Methodist church in reference to political matters in this country. And so with reference to every other representative of every other church. But can you compare a bishop of the Methodist church or a bishop of the Anglican church with Monseigneur Sbarretti? Who does not know that, with my right hon. friend in power, when Monseigneur Sbarretti, representing forty-one per cent of the people of this country, makes a plea, he holds out a hope through his authority of a fulfillment of the promise made in his country. And so with reference to every other church or collection of churches in this country. Now, I can see that some one will rise on the other side and declare that I have made an incendiary speech. Why, the right hon. gentleman himself, seeing that he had no argument, had to have recourse to that kind of declamation, and it was very significant of the weakness of his case. For Monseigneur Sbarretti himself I have every respect.

Some hon. members—Oh, oh.

Mr. Foster—Quite a lot of skeptics on that side of the House. But I show my respect for Monseigneur Sbarretti by clearing him of the imputations which the position of my right hon. friend fastens upon him. So far as the Papal ablegate's position in this country is concerned, so far as his position as an envoy from the Church of Rome is concerned, he is welcome in this country, and let him stay here and grow up with this country and help to make it great. So far as his mission is confined to spiritual purposes in his own church, to the reconciliation of differences of doctrine, or of polity, or of church government, or anything in that broad domain, no one will cavil with his existence here, and no one will wish him a long and happy stay. But when he undertakes, presuming on the raison d'être of his position in this country, to set up a claim that he can interfere and use inducements by his interference, then I say that we intend to protest against that, and I believe we will be supported by the voice of Canada.

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