

But if the Prime Minister has been able to perform a great work in this country, what may we not expect of the young member from Quebec county, if we can get him on the right track?

But it appears that he is not the only guilty party. I observe a little further, that the member for Quebec county is accused of having one very wicked ally; for the Minister of Justice says:

To whom but Sir Wilfrid was Canada indebted for the measure that made him the mark of the outcry in the province by false friends such as Mr. Bourassa, who pretended to be his allies?

Perhaps that is intended by my hon. friend the Minister of Justice as in some measure taking the responsibility away from the new member for the county of Quebec and transferring it to my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa). At all events, in view of the crisis pointed out by the Minister of Justice, I think it would be well for us to have some words of explanation from the Prime Minister, and to be reassured upon this matter at as early a date as possible.

Any preference by Great Britain to Canadian products was repudiated by the Prime Minister of Canada in 1897 and also by my hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture afterwards on at least two occasions. We have heard through the press, but only through the press, that negotiations have taken place between this government and the government of Australia, and that there has been some negligence on the part of this government in replying to communications from the government of the Australian Commonwealth. I think it would be well for the Prime Minister to inform us whether there have been such negotiations and whether there has been neglect on the part of his government to answer communications made by the Australian government in reference to this important matter, and I trust that he will do so when he comes to address the House.

My hon. friend the Minister of the Interior professes to be a stout defender of the public domain of Canada; I do not allude to utterances that he may have made in private, but to his public utterances. It would appear from an abridged prospectus of the Southern Alberta Land Company, which I have in my hand, that some 390,000 acres of land in Southern Alberta are the property of that company, and that 380,575 acres have been acquired by that company under agreement with the Crown bearing date the 26th of June, 1906, at the price of \$3 per acre, of which \$2 per acre is to be handed back when paid by expenditure in irrigation works. It appears further that this land when irrigated can be sold for from \$20 to \$25 per acre, and that the cost of irrigation is from \$6 to \$10 per acre; and that the rate charged by the company

for water supply to the settlers will pay for the maintenance of the work. Under these circumstances it would appear that the gentlemen interested in this company will gain a very handsome profit out of these 380,000 acres of land.

I would venture respectfully to inquire whether the government took into consideration before entering into that agreement the desirability of undertaking irrigation works themselves, by commission or otherwise, and of retaining for the people of this country the increment in value which, under present conditions, will go to the fortunate speculators who are members of this company. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) hardly seems to justify the promises which he made last session, or at least the attitude he took last session, in entering into an agreement of the kind, and we ought to have full information later on.

I would like also to know the present position of W. T. R. Preston in the public service. Last year a certain motion was made with regard to him. Some interest in that resolution, which called for Mr. Preston's dismissal, was taken by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House and notably by the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) who insisted with great persistency upon obtaining the explicit promise of the Minister of the Interior that there would be a thorough investigation into matters about which Mr. Preston had at that time been giving evidence before two of the committees of this House for several weeks. Well, we do not know what investigation has been held. We shall hear of that I presume later on, from either the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) or the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver), but there are rumours that although Mr. Preston is not now in the public service in the capacity he formerly held, he has been promoted to another position and is to represent the people of this country in the far east. I have no information upon this subject, I am referring to it in order to obtain information, and I trust the Prime Minister before he takes his seat to-day will inform the House whether an investigation has been held, what the result is, and whether Mr. Preston is now in the public service and if so in what capacity.

There is one other matter to which I would like to call attention. When the Hon. D. C. Fraser, formerly a member of this House and afterwards a judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia was appointed to be Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, I think in February last, a vacancy upon the bench of that province was created. As far as I am aware that vacancy has not been filled. I would like to ask the Prime Minister to-day why it is that an important position of that character has been left unoccupied until this day. The bench of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia should con-