

OTTAWA, 6th June, 1887.

MR. SPEAKER,—I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of date 3rd June current, asking me to take notice of a complaint directed against me, and addressed to you, by Honorable J. A. Chapleau, Secretary of State, on the 22nd May, 1887. This complaint demands that I should be dismissed from the service of the House of Commons as French translator of the Debates, alleging that I acted with indescribable violence at the last electoral campaign, both on the hustings and in the press; that I said and wrote in regard to the Honorable Secretary of State things so offensive and calumnious that he could neither speak to me nor salute me in the House; "and I speak with sincerity, when I say," continues he, "that his presence within the precincts of this chamber is to me a nuisance, to which, as it seems to me, no one has a right to subject a member of the House."

The Secretary of State says, moreover, "Mr. Ernest Tremblay published against me personally, an insulting pamphlet, which I read only a few weeks ago and which I send to you, underlining some of the numerous *compliments* with which the work is replete. Mr. Tremblay acted at the electoral campaign in several counties in the most violent manner against members who sit in this chamber."

I now give my reply, Mr. Speaker, as briefly as possible, to the accusations of violence and calumny of which I am supposed to have been guilty towards the Secretary of State and other members of the national representation.

I have always maintained the greatest reserve in the public discussions to which I have been called in my capacity of a citizen of a free country. All my adversaries have borne me witness to that effect; and if, as I doubt not, you have had occasion to hear me, you know that in this I am stating what is true. I am constitutionally disinclined to violence in public discussions. In the course of the late campaign I took part only in two elections—that of the County of Brome and that of the County of Richelieu. In neither of these counties did I designate by name any member of the House of Commons; and never, however lively the contest may have been, did I forget myself so far as to insult anyone. I appeal here to the testimony of the honorable member for Brome, Mr. Fisher, to that of the honorable member for Richelieu, Mr. Labelle, and to that of the honorable member for St. Hyacinthe, Mr. Bernier. These are, to the best of my knowledge, the only three representatives of the people who had occasion to hear me at the last general election. If there are others who may have been among my hearers, I appeal, in like manner, to their testimony.

I now come to my pamphlet.

Mr. Chapleau states that he read it only a few weeks ago. I may be permitted to say here that such indifference seems to me somewhat strange. The pamphlet was published in the month of December, 1885; the two first copies were stitched, placed under covers and addressed to the Secretary of State at Ottawa. This brochure was distributed over the whole country and was variously criticised by the organs of the press. I flatter myself that I did not therein calumniate anyone. The meaning to be attributed to words is purely a question of interpretation, but I took pains to establish the distinction which I made between opinions, functions and persons. In my mind there was no confounding of these terms, and I deny categorically ever having been guilty of insulting personalities when I stigmatized, with all the energy of which I am capable, general administrative acts which I considered deserving of reprobation. This right of stating my views of the conduct of political parties in the country, the House of Commons did not take from me when it appointed me to the position alike onerous and poorly remunerated and of which I am the humble incumbent. I am not inclined to give it up; for, Mr. Speaker, our position is not the same as that of the employés of the Civil Service. The latter are under the control of the Government. The Government, whose members are taken from the ranks of one party only, may have objections to its subordinates publicly questioning the wisdom of its policy; but the House of Commons, of which we are the servants, is composed of the representatives of all shades of national opinion. In