

speaking the French language, and three in the House of Commons.

I say it is a matter of perfect indifference to this country whether there is a French Canadian Member of this House in the Cabinet or not, or whether there should be two members here and two in the other House, or one here and three in the Commons; all that we can require is that our language should be respected, and understood, and that as a nationality a fair share of influence should be afforded us. I have of late years studied this question and I have failed to see yet that the influence of the French Canadian element has been diminished in this Senate, because there is not in the Government one of its members speaking the French language as his mother tongue. We have an hon. gentleman presiding over the deliberations of this House who speaks French fluently and who can decide any question of order in our language when we require it, and we have a Minister who can answer the hon. gentleman from DeLanaudière in his own tongue on any public question, if he requires it. But it is a singular coincidence that the two hon. gentlemen who have taken it upon themselves to vindicate the rights of the French element in this House have both addressed the Senate in English. Why have they not been consistent in asserting the rights of the French Canadian people by speaking their language when addressing Parliament? I may say that I am primarily responsible for the formation of the French section of the Administration in 1878. When I arrived from Europe, Sir John Macdonald asked me to take charge of the formation of the French section of the Cabinet. I knew, as every man knows who has had experience in the formation of governments in this country, that I had a hard task before me. I had not to consider whether the Senate or the House of Commons should be particularly represented, or how they should be represented in the Cabinet, but I had to weigh carefully what was best in the interest of the whole Dominion, in deciding who were the men who should be called upon to form the Administration. I do not pretend to say that there are not gentlemen in this House who might well be called on to take a seat in the Government. I think there are gentlemen speak-

ing the French language in this House, fully capable of forming part of that Administration, but under the circumstances I had to act for the best, and I think that in the recommendations I made to my hon. leader I have met the wishes of the country, and I have the best proof of that, by the general approbation we received both in this House, and in the House of Commons while I held a seat there as a Minister of the Crown. The popularity of the Government we formed has been increasing steadily since then, and if the course I took on that occasion—and I wish to take the full responsibility for it—had been unfair to the French Canadian element in this country, does the hon. gentleman imagine that we would have been returned with the overwhelming majority we received at the last general election? The hon. gentleman knows that we are now as powerful in this country as we have ever been since the last change of Government. I think no hon. gentleman will claim that we have had more than a fair share in the Government of this country, but if the hon. member from DeLanaudière looks back over the history of the Dominion for the past few years I will ask him whether the French element, since the Conservative Government has been formed, has not had its fair share of influence, and whether we have not been treated as we should have been? I can tell the hon. gentleman this, that the country at large feel that in the Government I assisted to form, we have selected men who have been able to benefit the Dominion, and I am ready to abide by the verdict of the people as to whether we, as Ministers of the Crown, deserved the confidence and support of the French population of this country. As I said before I would have preferred, and still would prefer, and those who succeeded me in the Government would still prefer, to have an hon. member in this House representing the French element in the Cabinet. I do not know the reason why they have not appointed one; I cannot speak for them, I can only speak for myself, and the only explanation I am at liberty to give as to why the Government did not offer a seat to a French member of the Senate is that after having carefully weighed all the circumstances before them, they believed that the Gov-