

House of Commons Debates

FOURTH SESSION—TENTH PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, March 2, 1908.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

LANDS TITLES ACT AMENDMENT.

Hon. FRANK OLIVER (Minister of the Interior) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 113) to amend the Land Titles Act. He said: This Bill is intended to provide for the holding of land by the ecclesiastical authorities of the various churches in territories under the immediate jurisdiction of the Dominion government with regard to land.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

ASH WEDNESDAY ADJOURNMENT.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). I gave notice last week that on Friday of that week I would move that when this House adjourns on Tuesday next it stands adjourned until Thursday, March 5. Unfortunately, on Friday, the House was otherwise engaged, and I could not move my motion. I will move it to-morrow.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE—MR. TALBOT, M.P.

Mr. O. E. TALBOT (Bellechasse.) Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of privilege. There is a two column editorial article in this morning's 'Citizen' to which I take very strong exception. One paragraph to which I call particular attention is as follows:—

Another feature of this remarkable session demands comment. It was noticeable that most of Hon. Mr. Brodeur's colleagues in the cabinet, with the exception of Hon. Mr. Bureau, maintained a discreet silence, or afforded him but little assistance, in the three

days' struggle. With the exception of the ministers told off in relays to 'lead the House,' the others came and went with an ostentatiously detached air, and, except during the regular hours of session the Minister of Marine was only supported by a small but faithful guard of his Quebec colleagues. On several occasions they came to his assistance with vehement charges that the hon. gentleman was being 'persecuted' by the opposition because he was a French-Canadian. Anything more absurd in the face of the facts could not be conceived, and this invocation of the race cry took on all the semblance of a threat. Invoked under such unreasonable conditions, it suggested the attitude that a French-Canadian in public life can do no wrong, and that to attempt to hold a minister from that province accountable, no matter what the circumstances might be, was resented as a reflection upon French Canada.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. The hon. member (Mr. O. E. Talbot) must remember that a question of privilege refers to himself personally.

Mr. TALBOT. Where I am personally interested is in that I consider myself alluded to in the expression 'small but faithful guard of his Quebec colleagues.' I resent the way the article is written, and, with your kind permission, I will finish it, for there is only one further sentence:

It is only fair to the French Canadian members to say that this ill-advised attitude was only assumed by a minority of Liberal members from that province, headed by Hon. Mr. Bureau.

As I was one of those who thought, and still think, that I was performing my duty as a representative of the province of Quebec, and also as a representative of Canada, I resent this paragraph as meaning that this was an organized affair amongst us, to make a political cry of it, meaning that persecution was directed against the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Brodeur) because he is a French Canadian. I am satisfied that if the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden), probably—