

exception of letters, sometimes anonymous sometimes otherwise, which came to me from both sides and to which I paid no more attention than such communications deserve—apart from these no pressure was put upon me. It has been often stated in the press which supports the hon. gentleman, and with which he is connected, that pressure had been put upon me by my constituents in Carleton. That statement is absolutely false. Not one of my constituents, I am glad to say, ever communicated with me, verbally or otherwise, with regard to this matter up to the time I spoke in this House.

Mr. BELCOURT. I accept unreservedly the statement of my hon. friend, but I had thought—and I think every member in this House will agree with me that it was a very legitimate thought—that the leader of one of the great parties in this House, in a matter of this kind, would naturally consult with his supporters and followers and be, to a very large extent, guided by their opinions. If he has not consulted the wishes of the people with whom he is associated on that subject, if he has not consulted the wishes of the county of Carleton which he represents, he is entitled to make the statement he has. But I thought it was only natural that he would consult his followers and the constituency he represents.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. My hon. friend persists in his personal allusions. I say again that I did not think it was a question upon which I should consult my constituents or upon which I was bound to consult them. At all events that is a matter for me to judge and not the hon. gentleman. It is really a matter with which he has no call to interfere. I do not know that I ever constituted him the censor of my mode of dealing with my constituents nor have I heard that they have ever given him any mandate to represent them. So far as my own friends are concerned, none of them knew what course I was going to take on this Bill, as far as I am aware. I announced it in caucus the day before I spoke in this House, and I did not announce it as a matter on which they should dictate to me but as a matter on which I had made up my mind, and I spoke in the House in accordance with the position I then took.

Mr. BELCOURT. I suppose the hon. gentleman thinks that, in a matter of this kind, it is not proper for him to consult his constituents or his followers in this House.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Neither did the First Minister.

Mr. BELCOURT. I am sorry to have brought these hon. gentlemen to their feet so often. I had no wish to say anything offensive, and I submit that the remarks I made were quite within parliamentary rules. I am surprised to find that they should have caused so much trouble and

anxiety to hon. gentlemen opposite. I accept the statement of the leader of the opposition that he did not consult anybody, either his followers in the House or his constituents. But there is a very shrewd suspicion on this side that in taking the course he did, he took the lines indicated by the hon. gentlemen who follow him, whether he consulted them or not. There is a very shrewd suspicion that the game he is playing to-day is that which the gentlemen who sit behind him have set for him, that he is following the pace they set for him, and that, not with a great deal of relish, it is evident, but still bravely enough, he is trying to keep ahead of the procession which these gentlemen have organized. He realized at the outset that in doing so he was going to alienate a great many of his friends in the province of Quebec. He realized that the course he was inspired to take was going to alienate his friends in the province, and he tried to make up for it by paying them compliments. They asked him for bread and he gave them a stone. They asked him for bread, and he gave them petrified bouquets. I wonder if the hon. gentleman deceived himself to the extent of believing that any one in the province of Quebec is to be hoodwinked by these empty and sonorous compliments. If he did, he had a very prompt, rude and sad awakening. Within a few hours from the time he delivered his speech, the most accredited and influential of his lieutenants was on his feet, and in a remarkable speech destroyed to atoms the speech which his leader had so laboriously prepared and so laboriously delivered. The example set by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk)—and I hope my hon. friend will permit me to pay him the compliment of saying that he rose to a very high ideal and made a most remarkable speech—was followed to-day by my hon. friend from Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron), who told us that he also, like his colleague from Jacques Cartier, was going to vote against the amendment of his leader. He must realize to-day that the course he has taken with or without consultation with his followers has broken the ranks of his own party. He must realize to-day that, whether he intended it or not, his action on this question is a boomerang, and that while the ranks of the opposition to-day are divided, the ranks of the Liberal party present an unbroken front. When the vote is taken on this question there will be given for the Bill the largest majority that was ever given in this parliament on a great question.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken much longer than I intended to. But I think that if the interruptions with which I have been favoured were taken out of my speech—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. There would not be much left.