

Bill irrespective of party and irrespective of religious feeling. I cannot be sure of that. I know that every Quebec delegate on this side of the House is going to vote for the Bill. The other night, when my hon. friend from Beauce (Mr. Bédard) was pointing out that Catholic majorities had elected Protestant members to this House, the hon. member for East Elgin (Mr. Ingram) said that every one of them was going to vote for the Bill. I do not know whether he had authority to say so or not, I do not know whether the hon. members for Huntingdon (Mr. Walsh), for Montreal, St. Antoine (Mr. Ames), for Argenteuil (Mr. Perley) and for Sherbrooke (Mr. Worthington) had told him so, or if he had authority to say so.

Mr. INGRAM. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Bédard) was using the argument that in the province of Quebec Protestants were elected in constituencies which were largely Roman Catholic. He was basing his argument on that fact, and I said that if so they would all vote for the Bill, meaning that they would be guided by the opinions of those who elected them.

Mr. FISHER. Exactly, that is just what I am saying. I stated it rightly.

Mr. INGRAM. That is what I say now.

Mr. FISHER. My hon. friend repeats it. Again I say that it is a poor compliment to pay to his colleagues on that side of the House, whose natural predilections and whose party alliances, affiliations and surroundings, would induce them to vote against a government Bill, or against a Bill introduced by this government at any rate, and I think my hon. friend will acknowledge—

Mr. INGRAM. We have had the statement of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) of the position of the opposition on this question, which is that it is an open question, and that every member is at liberty to vote as he pleases.

Mr. FISHER. Yes; that is very good indeed. The Conservative party have no policy on it. The Conservative party have no principles upon it. They have no principles upon anything. We would like to know it if they have; we would like to hear what their principles are, so that the people of the country may judge them.

Mr. INGRAM. Before the session is over I will enlighten the hon. gentleman on a few of them.

Mr. FISHER. All right.

Mr. SPROULE. Did the government say to their following: We will leave this an open question?

Mr. FISHER. We did not require to. We are a united party on this question. We are a party of conciliation; a party which, while the majority rules, recognizes

the rights of minorities. Hon. gentlemen opposite used to undertake to control the members of their party. I can remember a Tory leader in Canada who held the whip over his followers and made them come to time on such a question as this. But things have changed since those good old days. The present hon. leader of the opposition has a rebellious party around him, there is mutiny in the ranks, and he knew when he made that statement here that he had to make it, because if he had not the rebellion would have been open, and his followers would not have followed him. We have the proud spectacle of a great political party in opposition in this House. We have a policy advanced by the hon. leader of the opposition; we have a policy advanced, perhaps, by the hon. member for East Elgin, and we have policies advanced by other hon. members. They have a policy on which they cannot unite their own party, and by which they cannot draw any votes from ours.

Mr. SPROULE. What made the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) resign?

Mr. FISHER. The hon. ex-Minister of the Interior has explained that very thoroughly, so that the House and the country fully understand it, and the ex-Minister of the Interior has told the country that he is going to vote for the Bill with the amended clause.

Mr. SPROULE. You had to amend it all the same.

Mr. FISHER. I therefore believe, Sir, that I voice the feeling of the Protestants of the province of Quebec. It may be said, and it has been said, that some gentlemen on the other side of the House do not believe in their vote but have to give it because of fear of their electors. That cannot be said of the press of the province of Quebec. That cannot be said of the Montreal 'Gazette'; that cannot be said of the Montreal 'Star'; that cannot be said of the Montreal 'Witness' which is the particular exponent of Protestant feeling in the province of Quebec, which for years has been—I will not say ultra-Protestant but consistently and always Protestant in its first principles. The Montreal 'Witness' has been that in all conscientiousness and all integrity, and it is well recognized as being essentially a Protestant newspaper. But listen to what the Montreal 'Gazette,' the leading English Conservative paper of the province said the other day:

The threat has been made in the House of Commons that the passage of the Autonomy Bills will be obstructed, as was the passage of the Remedial Bill in 1896. It can be trusted that no attempt will be made to put the threat into execution, first, from a national point of view, second, because the Conservative party would stand to lose from such a line of action.

I hope hon. gentlemen opposite will take that home.