

lies supported the Prime Minister. And the man in the street says: Now comes the farcial part of the play. The session was called. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), previous to calling the session, had to go away to a health resort. He was so nervous he could not help with the Bill, and the Prime Minister thought it not well to advise him of the clauses of the Bill for fear of the effect it might have upon his nerves. The Bill was introduced in his absence. It was introduced also in the absence of the Minister of Finance who also had a call away from Ottawa before this parliament was called. Parliament met. The Bill was introduced. The Prime Minister, contrary to all parliamentary usage, made a great speech on the introduction of the Bill. Two days afterwards the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) comes home on the run. When he came here he did not look at all as if he had been sick. As soon as he read the First Minister's speech, playing his part of the Act, he tendered his resignation. But he came back again. He came back under an arrangement it is said. And the arrangement was this: After the row, and after he had resigned, an amended clause was to be brought down by the Prime Minister, which is practically the same as the original clause, but the ex-Minister of the Interior was to put a different construction on it in his speech. But I will challenge my hon. friend from Three Rivers (Mr. Bureau), the hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) and the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) to say that this amended clause gives no more than is stated by the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding)—simply half an hour's religious teaching after school hours.

Mr. BUREAU. That is what the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) said.

Mr. TAYLOR. I challenge the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Bureau) to say that that is what is meant by the clause. The consideration for which the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) was to stand up and swallow himself was that he would be appointed High Commissioner for Canada or else given back his old job, which would pay as well as the other. The man on the street will say: You may talk all you like, but this is simply a game that has been played. And the man on the street, with the ballot in his hand, only waits for next election to vote against this government. He will say: I will not vote to support a government that are trying to fool the people all the time. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) also was not consulted in the framing of the Bill, and when he came back he kicked very strongly for a while. He was playing his part in the farce. The government had a serious time for two or three weeks, with the resignation of the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) in and ac-

cepted and that of the Minister of Finance threatened. I do not wish to take up the time of the House in reading the former utterances of the Minister of Finance, but I would like to read what he said when he was swallowing himself. I quote from 'Hansard,' page 3139:

I am speaking in all seriousness. This is no matter for levity. I repeat that there is in a certain sense a crisis. There is no party crisis, but there is a crisis with regard to the administration of public business in Canada by any government and any party. If my right hon. friend should retire on an issue like this, then the only thing that could possibly happen, if my hon. friend the leader of the opposition should agree to form a government at such a time, would be that he must form a Protestant government and he must have a general election.

An hon. MEMBER. Shame.

Mr. FIELDING. Who says shame?

Mr. OSLER. This is the first time that the religious question has been introduced.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order; sit down.

Now, I would like to ask my hon. friend from Shefford (Mr. Parmelee) who it was who first raised this question of religion?

Mr. BUREAU. It was first raised in the circular of the 16th of February, issued by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule).

Mr. TAYLOR. There is nothing in that circular that any one should object to.

I read further:

Mr. FIELDING. I do not think that the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Osler) has paid me the compliment of trying to understand what I was presenting to the House. Again I repeat—and I want to guard against any misapprehension, I want to give the hon. gentleman who said 'shame' an opportunity to say it again, because I want to state the situation as it actually exists. I say this is becoming a religious question. Who denies it? My hon. friend the leader of the opposition said as much to-day.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I beg my hon. friend's pardon, I said nothing of the kind. If so understood, I desire to disclaim any such intention. I argued this question, as my right hon. friend the First Minister did in the first instance, on the constitutional ground, because in his remarks to this House, both on the 21st February and again to-day, he put the question solely on that ground.

Mr. FIELDING. The point is not important. I understand my hon. friend, the leader of the opposition, to have spoken, in the course of his speech to-day, of the religious differences which unhappily would arise in this matter. I think that will be found somewhere in 'Hansard'; but it is not important, and if he says he made no allusion of the kind, I withdraw the remark. But I say that it is in the minds of a large portion of the people of Canada a religious question. I take the responsibility of saying—and every man opposite knows it—that this question to-day is largely shaping itself as a religious question. We have on the one side the Roman Catholic body, largely united and on the other side a large portion of the Protestant body who are agitating against this Bill on what may be called religious lines. I