

Trucklers to Quebec.

What will it profit R. L. Borden, M.P., E. B. Osler, M.P., or any other Conservative leader to run away from the Hamilton Spectator's declaration that 'never again will a French Canadian be premier of Canada?'

Messrs. Borden and Osler do not edit the Hamilton 'Spectator,' fortunately for the readers of that journal.

The Hamilton 'Spectator' does not lead the Conservative party, or it might be better and could not be worse led.

Ontario is just about tired of having the Conservative party led from the Montreal 'Star' office, or from the latitude and longitude of Mr. Monk's ideas and Mr. Bergeron's ideas.

The Hamilton 'Spectator' may have erred in saying what everybody thinks, but if Mr. Borden and Mr. Osler apologize for their own errors they will have no time to waste apologizing for the errors of the Hamilton 'Spectator.'

It is, unfortunately, true that Mr. Borden and Mr. Osler and other Conservative leaders share the views of the Montreal 'Star' rather than the opinions of the Hamilton 'Spectator.'

Quebec will not give Mr. Borden votes in return for his subservience to the ideas of the Montreal 'Star,' Mr. Monk and Mr. Bergeron.

Ontario is already alienated from Mr. Borden by his lack of decision and courage upon this school question.

Quebec is the shadow, Ontario is the substance, and it will be Mr. Borden's own fault if a solid Ontario for freedom does not supply the logical answer to a solid Quebec for coercion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I say that does not speak well for the press of this country, it does not speak well for the Conservative party, to have its leading organs uttering such unworthy sentiments as that, and it will be a sad day in the history of this country if the time should ever come, and I believe it will not come, when the highest position in this land, that of Prime Minister, is not open to any Canadian, whatever be his religion or whatever be his race. I could give many other illustrations to show how public feeling has been aroused in this country, a result largely due I think to the course pursued by the Conservative party. I have recently seen two letters addressed to hon. members of this House both from residents of the province of Ontario. The writer of one letter inquired if it were not true that the Roman Catholics of Canada serving in our militia got bigger pay per day than the Protestants. I saw another letter inquiring as to whether it was not true that all through the province of Quebec there were being stored rifles and ammunition in the basements of the Catholic churches. These gentlemen scented danger, and they may have been quite honest in their fear; but I say they were aroused to this particular form of excitement largely by the position taken by the Conservative party.

Now I wish to refer for a moment to the remarks of the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster). He made the famous

declaration in discussing this Bill that he felt himself quite free to reverse the position which he took in 1896 by reason of the fact that the Conservative party was defeated in that year, and had been defeated twice since. Now, Sir, no declaration has been quoted more frequently in the United States than that of Henry Clay, who said that he would rather be right than be president. But the declaration made by the hon. member for North Toronto is that he will follow the people, whether they are right or whether they are wrong. He is like the immortal Flannigan from Texas, who, in closing a speech, addressed his audience saying: 'Gentlemen, them's my sentiments, and if they don't suit you they can be changed.' Now certainly these are not high ideals to put before the youth of this country. There is a distinction between right and wrong, and there is surely no reason in this country why a person should desert what he considers to be the true position merely because his party meets with a political reverse, and possibly upon some other issue altogether. But I do not for a moment admit that the Conservative party were defeated in 1896 upon the school question. I may not agree with some of my own political friends on that point. The Conservative party about that time were in rather a bad state, they could not get along with themselves, and certainly they could not get along with the country. The hon. gentleman who leads the opposition in the other chamber said that on New Year's Day, 1896, that day when the whole world breathes forth hosannas of peace on earth and good will towards man, he made a call upon one of the ministers, and he tells us that while he was paying his respects to the ladies, this minister was trying to seduce one of his other ministers away from the cabinet. Now if such conduct prevailed on New Year's Day among cabinet ministers, surely we could expect almost anything to occur in the ranks of the Conservative party. But I notice that the principles of the hon. member for North Toronto, his political ethics, were not of a much higher standard in the past than they are to-day. He addressed this parliament in 1896 upon the Manitoba school question and I think he was the last speaker on the government side. I must admit that he made a speech which was an exceedingly able and admirable one, notwithstanding that there are portions of it with which I do not agree. I wish to read just a short quotation from that speech to show what was the standard of political ethics of that hon. gentleman then and when I read that I am sure hon. gentlemen will not be surprised at the position taken by him the other day. He was then addressing the Conservative party. He knew that there were to be many desertions from the ranks