

tions are correct, it would be the member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), and I rise to give that the most emphatic contradiction possible. There is not a word of truth in the statement. I am not here to deny that petitions may have come in on the other side from the province of Quebec. About that I know nothing. The Minister of Justice endeavoured to lead this House to believe that these petitions were distributed among the Protestants of Ontario for the purpose of inflaming their passions, but that similar petitions were not distributed among the Protestants of Quebec. I said last night, and I repeat, that the very same petitions which were distributed in Ontario were distributed throughout Quebec, and many of them have come back since signed, not only by Conservatives, but by Reformers as well. If petitions did come from the supporters of the one party for and against a certain measure, does it necessarily follow that the members of that party are working these petitions for the purpose of raising sectional strife? If it does, then let me refer the hon. gentleman to the fact that supporters of the government in Ontario are petitioning to-day in hundreds of thousands against the very Bill the government has before the House, and from the province of Quebec as well, and likewise the maritime provinces. They are petitioning against this Bill, while, at the same time, supporters of the government are sending here petitions in favour of it—doing the very thing which the Minister of Justice tried to lead this House to believe is so very wrong. Because petitions come against this Bill from Conservatives and also in favour of it, therefore the Conservatives must be doing something that is radically wrong. But the very same thing applies to the opposite side. And, as my hon. friend from East Elgin has said: Is it not the right of every British subject to petition the Crown and parliament? Have we not members supporting the Conservative party who are to-day supporting this Bill and others who are opposing it? Have we not among the members of the Reform party some who are petitioning for this Bill and others against it? If that argument is worth anything, it applies with equal force to the opposite side as well as to this side.

But, with respect to the petitions that have been circulated, the hon. Minister of Justice made the statement that they were deliberately and intentionally put in circulation to arouse religious strife and passion. What justification has he for making that statement? Who is responsible for raising the religious strife and passion that have been imparted into this debate during the present session? Was it the Conservative party?—not by any means. Who introduced the Bill? Was it not the Reform party? Who made an impassioned appeal along religious lines? Was it not the right hon. Prime Minister on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill and

Mr. SPROULE.

was it not a thing most unusual in this House? It invited reprisals from the other side of the House. I can tell the hon. Minister of Justice when he says that there will be no peace until it is fought out, and he added I throw down the gauntlet and I invite this fight to come on. He has thrown down the gauntlet and I assure him that he will not be disappointed about the fight. When it is over he can congratulate himself upon what he has done for the purpose of promoting peace, harmony and good feeling amongst the citizens of this country. If he succeeds in doing it I will be very much mistaken. He has thrown down the gauntlet to a class of people who will stand up for their rights whether it pleases or displeases the Minister of Justice. There is no doubt that from the commencement of this discussion, from the first word to the last which has been said on this subject, there has not been displayed so much rancour as that which has been exhibited by the hon. Minister of Justice, and there has not been heard as strong language as that which has come from the Minister of Justice who ought to be the last man in this House to set such an example to the parliament of Canada. If this measure results in arousing passions and creating hard feelings let me assure hon. gentlemen opposite that upon them above all others must the responsibility rest.

Motion agreed to, and House went into Committee of Supply.

Mr. FIELDING. I do not imagine the House has any desire to take up the estimates at this hour. I therefore move that the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance) moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What business may we expect to-morrow?

Mr. FIELDING. We may take up the business at the point at which we left off to-night; that is if we have a clear conception of what that point is.

Mr. FOSTER. Yesterday when the hon. Minister of Finance was not in I asked the right hon. First Minister if there was any decision as to the probable time of bringing down the budget speech and he promised to confer with the hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. FIELDING. I am sorry that I am not able to give a definite answer to my hon. friend. I will promise that he will