

before the House; for, if in January, 1876, the Government found out that they had been committing a breach of the law of Parliament in giving contracts to a member of this House, and if, on having found out that they had committed this breach of the law, they ceased these contracts, they must also have known, and they did know, that from the 1st of January, 1876, and before that time, the then Speaker of this House had forfeited his seat in the House and his seat in Parliament, and yet was continuing in the House until the end of the Session of 1877. The Government who had admitted that they had found out there were improper practices going on, and that they had found that this hon. gentleman (Mr. Speaker), in becoming a Government contractor, had forfeited his seat, had kept him in his place, concealing from the House, concealing from the country, and concealing from everybody, knowledge of the fact that the hon. gentleman who sat in the Speaker's chair—he, the judge, he, the arbitrator, he, the arbiter, he who decided between right and wrong, he who decided between one side of the House and the other, he who was to hold the balance of justice equally between all the members of the House—was no member of Parliament at all, and no Speaker at all. The Government did so, and they continued this course until the matter was forced upon them by the motion of my hon. friend (Mr. Bowell), passing censure on them for their supineness. We supposed it was supineness, but, when we got that admission, we learned that it was not supineness, that they were aware of it, and yet, after they knew of it, and after they knew that the Speaker had forfeited his seat in the House, and after they knew he was no longer Speaker of this House, they kept him there, and retained him in the Chair contrary to every law of Parliamentary practice, and contrary to everything like propriety or decency, and they are now attempting to replace him in that position. Sir, the Speaker should be like Cæsar's wife, not only pure, but free from suspicion. How can we suppose that the Speaker who sat in that Chair for two years after

he must have been told that the contracts were stopped, and after he was told by the hon. gentleman opposite that his dealings with the Post Office Department were improper and illegal, and within the description of Parliamentary corruption, can hold the balance of justice equally hereafter. Mr. Clerk, it occurs to me that the answer which will be given to this by the country, at all events, will be that the Government has not had the magnanimity to admit that they are wrong, nor the magnanimity to admit that they committed an error, nor the magnanimity to say: "We did make a mistake, and we committed a great error, but we will not commit it again." But how do we find it? The point I take, and it is a point, I think, which cannot be answered, is that this House of Parliament cannot dispense with the rule, cannot dispense with any rule, cannot alter in the slightest degree any rule of Parliament. They have no right to dispense with the rule; no right to change its effect. They must be governed by that in every respect. And yet the hon. gentleman moves, in effect, to dispense with the rule in order to continue the original wrong done in keeping the hon. gentleman in the chair as Speaker, and moves that a Parliamentary principle should be broken for the purpose of carrying out his original proposition made in January, 1874. Sir, it looks something like power gone mad. The hon. gentleman seems to have lost his head, and thinks, because he has a majority, that he can set aside every rule; that he can set aside every principle of reason. It will ring through the country. It will ring from one end of Canada to the other. It has rung through the country, as the hon. gentleman knows, and it will continue to ring through the country, and the course the hon. gentleman is taking will tend to intensify the feeling in the country, as I think will be shown unmistakably, by every means by which we can understand that the feelings and opinions of the people can be judged. The hon. gentleman is starting out on the same old principle. The hon. gentleman kept him (Mr. Anglin) in the chair after he ceased to