

year, a vacancy occurred in the ranks of the Government arising out of an important question of policy which was discussed in this House. Owing to that difference a member of the Government handed in his resignation, and the office he held remained vacant during the remainder of last session. It was asked in this House when that office would be filled, and it was stated that it would be filled. That vacancy was more than an ordinary vacancy, from the fact that it arose out of a question that was more than an ordinary question; and the seven members of the former Government who resigned contended, and held to the contention, that any vacancy in the ranks of a Government held over from one session to another was not according to constitutional practice, and was not conducive to strength. In this case, they conceived, that contention had even more force because of the peculiar nature of the circumstance out of which the vacancy had occurred; and it was on that point, as stated both in the first statement made by the seven Ministers who resigned, and as stated by the Premier in another place this afternoon—it was upon that point that the differences existed, and upon that point that the resignations took place. Now, Sir, that vacancy has been filled, and consequently the Premier is able to present a completed Government; and that vacancy has been filled from the same province from which the vacancy was made, and by an adherent, and a favourable adherent, of the very same question out of which the vacancy arose last year. The Government has been completed, then, and it has been strengthened by the addition to it of the hon. gentleman whose name has been mentioned here to-day—Sir Charles Tupper, Baronet. Some gentlemen on the other side rose to the occasion, as they always do, and have tried to break the force of that addition to the Government by saying that one member of the family went out and another come in, but the plums remained in the family just the same. These gentlemen are inaccurate as usual. Sir Charles Tupper has been in the enjoyment of one of the highest offices in the gift of this country, where he has stood between this country and the Imperial authorities, where he has been of the utmost service to this country. Sir Charles Tupper, true as always to the call of his party and to the interests of his party, to-day resigned that high and honourable and distinguished office in order to come down among the rank and file of his fellow labourers in the old Conservative party to help to lead them to victory again, as he has often done in the past. And Sir Charles Tupper, the younger, my colleague—whose absence from the present Government I and all my colleagues deplore, whose services were of the best and whose abilities were of the highest in the Government—he

Mr. FOSTER.

is with us still, though he has voluntarily and for the good of the party been willing to return to the rank and file of ordinary membership, and battle strongly and loyally and effectively, as he did before, for the progress and prosperity of the party; but, Sir, he does it now without the salary that attaches to the Minister of the Crown, and therefore my hon. friend opposite was wrong. But what position is that for a man who aspires to be a statesman? What expression is that for a man who hopes some day himself to become a member of a Government in Canada—to taunt us on this side with not being gentlemen; to taunt us with lowering the type and the grade of public life in this country: to point to a man on this side, one of my colleagues or myself, as feeding at the public crib. Is that my hon. friend's idea of what governments or Ministeries mean? If so, all I have to say is that the moment his lips utter a sentence of that kind he pronounces his own condemnation. So I say there is no difference in the statement as handed down by myself on behalf of the gentlemen who retired from the Ministry a few days ago and the statement that has been authorized by the Premier to be read here to-day in so far as the main points of the question is concerned. Some men say to us, Why did you agree with the Speech and put it in the mouth of His Excellency, and then, before it was discussed and passed by this House, tender your resignations? The Premier himself, in his statement as read here to-day, has given the reason and the only reason. We often discussed that question of constitutional difference with him. In his statement to-day he says that up to the very time of the meeting of the House he had hoped to be able to fill that vacancy, and so present a united Government to carry on the business of the country, and that his own disappointment was equal to ours when he found that he was not able to do it. But, Sir, cannot six or seven gentlemen, who have gone in and out of this House of Commons and who have been before this country for some considerable time, say that in duty bound—and reading that duty in the only light in which they could read it—they were perfectly consistent having once insisted on the constitutional practice in handing in their resignations and not consenting to remain in the Government when that constitutional practice seemed to them not going to be carried out? Cannot they be considered as having some regard to the contention that was held as fundamental? Cannot they be considered as being honest in that? And is it wise—does it help to raise the tone of public life in Canada—is it true or honest—to say that when they have these convictions and carry them out, they are to be charged with treachery, with conspiracy, with everything that is dark and underhand and mean? I think if such had been the rule in past times, the history