

their better judgment and conscience told them they were not doing right. They fought for him in the committees even when they knew they were violating every canon of just and fair inquiry into the expenditures of the country. Yet when a choice has to be made of a cabinet minister, these men are counted out. What was the answer my right hon. friend gave? I had, he said, to go out and look for the best men. And the best men he could only find outside the ranks of those servile followers, who have followed him so faithfully from 1878 to the present day, and many of whom, I am bound to say, are of equal ability and experience to the two hon. gentlemen he has chosen. These old veterans have still to go on doing the muck-ing and such work, and when a foreman has to be called in, he is taken from the outside.

The Liberal of the old time, who has served him faithfully, comes to him and says: If you have honours and rank to bestow, do you not think it would be well to give them to men who have never wavered in their Liberalism? Equal ability? Anything like equal ability? What does party service for eighteen or twenty years require that it should be regarded as unfitting men for the higher grades of office? My right hon. friend has a great penchant for looking after the flotsam and jetsam of the Liberal-Conservative party. When, under stress of weather, the old Liberal-Conservative ship was partly dismantled, my right hon. friend's heart was aroused to sympathy. Straightway he sends out his wreckers, takes up the wreckage, dries it off and lands it in the Senate, or in office. I thank my right hon. friend for having taken care of a great deal of that kind of material that was at one time part of the old Liberal-Conservative ship. And this is the last and most brilliant example. My hon. friend (Mr. Pugsley) and myself are old acquaintances. We respect each other; yet we criticise each other; we have had a good deal to do with each other. And my hon. friend will not take it amiss if I recall to his memory—for fear it may slip like the lapsing memory of the Prime Minister—that, up to 1896, he was an ardent follower of Liberal-Conservative principles. He accepted the Liberal Conservative nomination in the county of Kings and he fought the battle, until it was found that he could not fight it successfully, when he was practically asked to retire for the sake of the party.

Mr. PUGSLEY. I am not so sure of that.

Mr. FOSTER. That is my version—
Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. FOSTER. And it is perfectly good until a better one is shown.

Mr. PUGSLEY. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) has had some failures in New Brunswick himself.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Pugsley) went down to the city of St. John, and, with great astuteness—I shall never deny him that quality—took his stand upon a platform which would make it delightfully easy to step off on one side or the other according as the signs showed in the political zodiac. These signs favouring the star of my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) a lesser star has taken its place in the firmament, and adds its rays to those of the overwhelmingly brilliant galaxy that to-day shines upon us from the front benches. It may be that, within the next two or three years, before an election comes, there will be other floatsam and jetsam to be picked up. I commend it to the merciful care and sympathetic handling of my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier).

But he wanted to get the best. Did he ask Hon. Clifford Sifton to take a place in his cabinet? It is commonly stated that he did. I do not know whether any cabinet minister stated that or not, but it was so repeatedly reported that I think the right hon. gentleman ought to tell us whether he did really make an honest effort for the best man in the person of Mr. Sifton, and when he could not get him fell back on the next best man. If so, he does not always get the best. My right hon. friend has his chance and I hope he will explain to this House and to the country whether there was any truth in that statement, and, if so, what were the particular reasons why the gentleman to whom he first applied as the best man did not fall in with his proposals. But it may be satisfactory to all these ardent gentlemen who fight so strongly for their party and for the Prime Minister, that it is now plain that, so long as my right hon. friend is Prime Minister, whenever there is a vacancy in the cabinet he will go into the wider fields and search for the best man. While these hon. gentlemen behind him may be well enough, for what we may call the unskilled labour, when skill is required it must be sought outside.

Now, as to these three legends; what are they in brief? One is that at the colonial conference the right hon. gentleman played the part of the doughty hero on behalf of the threatened liberties of Canada and her sisters the daughter states of the empire. My right hon. friend surprised me this afternoon when he made the statement that he had to withstand the men who wished to make Canada and others of the daughter states mere satellites to revolve around Great Britain, occupying a position of humiliating dependence upon that power. I asked him the names of the men who took that position. But he had forgotten them—his memory failed him again. I ventured the assertion that he could not name them. And when he stated that it was a matter of appreciation, I said that, to my mind, it was a matter of fact, and I stated that I had read the records very carefully and