

and the conspiring of which we have been the witnesses—

Some hon. MEMBERS. No, no.

Mr. LAURIER—the plotting and conspiring which has been going on among hon. gentlemen opposite, to continue. For my part, I stand by the constitution, as I have always done. I have no objection to give all the delay that these hon. gentlemen want—even a delay of fifteen days, or more—provided we adjourn from day to day. Though my hon. friend, the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster), said some days ago that the crisis was only skin-deep, it is far deeper, I am afraid, than his words would convey. The hon. gentleman told us a few days ago that the cause of the crisis was simply this, that they, the stalwarts, the giants of the Administration, would no longer serve under a man who, in their estimation, while not altogether a pigmy, is still not their equal in stature and majestic proportions.

Mr. FOSTER. I suppose this is a paraphrase of the hon. gentleman?

Mr. LAURIER. I have no objection to take the words of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. FOSTER. I do not recognize the words; it is a paraphrase.

Mr. LAURIER. In language, the expression was more modest, but the thought was just the same. Will the hon. gentleman permit me to say that I am bound to take his statement? That is the law and the constitution. But the law and the constitution do not prevent me—nor even parliamentary courtesy—while accepting the statement, from accepting it, not with a grain, but with a very large measure of salt, indeed. This is not the first time we have heard an expression of opinion from the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) as to his leader, and the expressions he used on the public platform on other occasions do not bear out the opinion he has given on the floor of this House. This is not the cause of the crisis; the cause is deeper. What is the cause? It is simply this, that when Parliament is called upon to implement the promises which were made by the hon. gentleman himself towards the close of last session—when Parliament is called to pass the legislation which was then promised, the Government find that their party is irretrievably divided upon this question. That is the cause of the crisis at present. Was the information not spread broadcast throughout the country, when seven of the more important members of the Administration sent in their resignations to the Premier, that an urgent whip had been sent out to all the Conservative members to assemble here and hold a general caucus? The caucus was called, but it never sat. They dare not have it sit, and that is the reason we have this crisis. There have been caucuses

of provinces, but there has been no general caucus; and I must say to my hon. friend who leads the House (Sir Adolphe Caron) that for my part I cannot agree to an adjournment of more than one day. It is true the Government has not made much progress in the formation of the Cabinet, but if what is left of the Government to-day had displayed in the work of reconstruction the energy they had displayed in depleting this House of its members, perhaps they would be more advanced in their task. The greater part of their energy has been consumed in making voids in the representation of this House. Where is the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. McKay) to-day? Gone to his rewards—appointed collector of customs. Where is the hon. member for Monck (Mr. Boyle)? Gone to his reward, also. Where is the hon. member for Soulanges (Mr. Bain)? Also gone to his reward. Where is the hon. member for Missisquoi (Mr. Baker)? Gone to a sphere above. And the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Adams)? Also gone to a higher sphere. It is true that we still have with us my hon. friend from North Bruce. Under such circumstances, for my part, I think that, while it would be quite proper to grant an adjournment until tomorrow, it would be altogether antagonistic to the law of Parliament to have the adjournment extended to the time now asked by the Administration.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Mr. Speaker, I think that on reflection my hon. friend will regret the expressions he has used in reference to the statement which I brought down. From the remarks which have fallen from him I take it that the hon. gentleman doubts the correctness or veracity of this statement.

Mr. LAURIER. No, no.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Then what could the hon. gentleman have meant when he stated that the cause of this demand which was made, the reason of this delay which was asked by the Government, was to allow organized conspiracies to be carried into effect? Now, I submit to both sides of the House that the statements which I have had the honour of laying before Parliament from the beginning of this crisis have been absolutely frank and have taken the House into the confidence of the Government to the fullest possible extent. The hon. gentleman says that the constitutional practice is that the adjournment should take place from day to day and not beyond. Well, Sir, I must say that, in so far as I have been able to look up precedents, I think that the practice is not limited to an adjournment from day to day; and I take it that in a contingency like the present one—and I think it would be very difficult indeed to find a precedent for this occasion—the duty of the House is to afford every possible facility to the head of the Government and