

possess, for dealing with the conduct of our own officers when a palpable wrong or fraud has been perpetrated, as has been done in this case, on the returning officer's own statement of the facts. Taking this view, which appears to me to be as clear as the sun at noonday, I cannot be a party to any vote other than that which will give Mr. King, the gentleman elected on the 22nd of February last, the seat in this House. It is not a question of party. It is a question of the rights and privileges, of the honor and dignity, of this House. It is a case in which we are establishing a precedent. If it be said that there are no precedents for such a course, I think there was a precedent, although it was one I did not agree with; it was in 1883, when a gentleman having the minority of votes in King's, P.E.I., was declared a member of this House. That was a precedent in which Parliament took authority into its own hands, and acted without leaving the matter to the courts. I think an injustice was done in that case, and the course I then pursued is a course I have always pursued. I have always had a strong feeling against countenancing returning officers in taking powers such as have been used by the returning officers of King's, P.E.I., and Queen's, N.B. The county which I have the honor to represent has suffered on several occasions from wrongs of this kind. In the Old Parliament of Canada, the returning officer from the county of Essex, on two occasions, was brought before the Bar of the House in connection with election cases; and I have for years entertained a very strong opinion against allowing a servant of this House to take upon himself the authority to deal with matters of this kind. I think the precedent we ought to make should be a precedent that would deter returning officers from, in any case, attempting to exercise authority from a partisan point of view. Any question may be turned into a party question; but in England these questions are not considered party questions, and a member there is left free to act according to his conscience and his honor. I intend to keep myself free to do that on every occasion in which I am fully informed of the facts of the case, and in which I feel my own intelligence to be a sufficient guide. In any matter of the policy of the Government, in which, of course, the Government are better informed than I, I am willing to yield to their opinion, though I may have doubts. In the matter of the National Policy, although I think the Government have gone farther than the country anticipated they would when inaugurating this policy, and although I have serious doubts as to the results of this policy as now propounded, I intend to support the Government of the day. I intend also to give them loyal support in their railway policy and in their administrative policy as a whole; but in a matter such as this, which is clear as noon-day, when I am satisfied Mr. King is entitled to the seat, I cannot place my conscience in the hands of any hon. gentlemen. There is not an hon. gentleman opposite who supposes, for one moment, that I am one inch nearer to them because I take this stand and make this declaration. I do not think it is necessary that I should swear eternal friendship to a man because I decline to be a party to the appropriation of his pocket-book, and I do not think, because I am simply doing what I consider to be an act of justice and right, because I decline to rob Mr. King of his seat, that I am any nearer to those hon. gentlemen or their party. If for no other reason, the manner in which they conducted their recent election campaign throughout the country, and more especially in my own district, was certainly not calculated to draw me any nearer to them than I had been previously. In this case our main consideration ought to be for the personal honor and dignity of the House, and we should be animated by a feeling of *esprit de corps*. In the present day, we are not troubled with the encroachments of the Crown or of great nobles, as were the Commons of England at one time, but we may be troubled with

what is almost equally bad, a spirit of subserviency, and a too great servility to the Government of the day. While I have a strong desire to see these gentlemen remain in power and approve of their general policy, I think it is a mistake for us to give up our individual judgment; and, having formed my individual judgment on this question, I am bound in honor to carry out my views, even though I should be so unfortunate as to have to separate myself from my friends on this occasion. In England, party lines are not drawn in this way. Take for instance the case of Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Bradlaugh, we know, refused to take the oath, but subsequently, not having any regard for the oath, he said he would take it. Then the majority of the House of Commons refused to allow him to take it, because he had no regard for its sanctity. Mr. Bradlaugh was a supporter of Mr. Gladstone, and, consequently, Mr. Gladstone would not make a motion to prevent his taking his seat. Sir Stafford Northcote thereupon moved a resolution to this effect, which was supported by many of Mr. Gladstone's supporters, and carried by a large majority in the House. Mr. Gladstone did not resign, because on that occasion the leadership was taken out of his hands; and supposing, in this instance, Mr. King was given his seat, do you suppose, Sir, that would indicate a want of confidence in the Government? Do you suppose that the right hon. the First Minister would not be sustained on a direct vote of want of confidence? This House, I believe, would have the more confidence in him, because, possibly, he might have thought proper to make this an open question. It is a mistake to make a party question of every subject that comes up, and to draw party lines in that way in the House and country. I do not intend to say anything about the conduct of the gentleman who at present occupies Mr. King's seat. He is the guardian of his own honor. I am not here to vituperate him or anybody else. As regards Mr. Dunn, he may have been acting on legal advice, but he had no right to take legal advice. The matter was plain to him; his course was plain. His duty, when the polls were closed, was to sum up the returns of his different deputies, and send the return to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in favor of the man who had the majority of votes. When I think of the great powers Mr. Dunn conceived himself to be possessed of, I am astonished at his moderation; I wonder he did not dispose of both the candidates and seat himself instead of the gentleman he did. For the reasons I have given, being satisfied we have the power in our own hands to deal with this question, I intend to support the amendment of my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island. I think that it fully meets the case, and that it will be a valuable precedent for our future action. I may say, in reference to myself personally, that my action on a former vote in this connection was very much criticised in certain newspapers. I do not believe in that egotism which is always inducing a man to get up and rebut, as a matter of privilege, every trivial thing that a newspaper may say about him. But in justice to myself, and with your permission, Sir, I may crave the indulgence of the House. In this matter, although it was the first vote of any importance that came up in the House, having pledged myself, in a general letter to my constituents, during the recent election campaign, that in this House I would act in a straightforward and conscientious manner, I could not, on the first vote, act in a manner, which, from my point of view, would be anything but straightforward and conscientious. If words mean anything, I had no option but to vote as I did; and as reports were circulated that great feeling was caused in the party by my vote, I have this to say: that in relation to this matter the correspondents of the different newspapers who criticised my actions have entirely, as far as I know, drawn their facts from their imagination. During the years I have been in public life,