

gether unnecessary amount of expenditure in connection with the number of the Ministers. Those hon. gentlemen affirmed that argument in the House, and reiterated, with equal vehemence on public platforms, the charge that the Government were wasting the public revenues of the country by furnishing salaries for an unnecessary number of Ministers. And they brought what appeared to be strong and cogent arguments in support of that view. They asked the people to look across the borders, where forty millions, instead of four, were ably governed by an administration of seven members instead of fourteen, and they naturally reasoned that if forty millions could be successfully governed by an administration of seven members, it was altogether unnecessary to have thirteen Ministers to govern four millions. The time at length came when the responsibility of governing the country was cast upon those hon. gentlemen. The plea put forward for their subsequent action was that, when they made those statements the Government had then only four millions to govern, and the country comprised only Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but the Dominion had been extended by the addition of the North-West Territories, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, and the case was changed. But the case was not changed. Those hon. gentlemen knew right well that from the commencement of Confederation it was contemplated to bring all the British North American Provinces within the Dominion; and, therefore, that formed no justification for having adopted the change they did in relation to that question. Having defined a line of policy entirely opposed to that they had advocated when in Opposition, and having adopted a position on that subject utterly at variance with the principles they had formerly laid down, it was not surprising that hon. gentlemen opposite should require such a recast of the Cabinet as would give them more of that kind of talent specially adapted to meet the same case from different points of view, and one day reason in its favour, and the next day against, it with equal success. No doubt when those hon. gentlemen were

in Opposition, they succeeded in convincing their friends and supporters not only that they were quite sincere, but that all the arguments they adduced were conclusive and unanswerable. There was no doubt those hon. gentlemen would be equally able today to justify to the judgment of their friends and supporters that an entire right-about face, a complete change of front, and thorough repudiation of the principles they held when in Opposition, was also sustained by unanswerable argument and commended itself to the intelligence of the country. But they would find a great many people who would not be so ready to change with the changing breeze, not so ready to adopt whatever principles might suit the Administration of the day to present for their consideration, utterly irrespective of the principles they had advocated, and succeeded in convincing their followers were correct the previous day. A feature of the Bill which would commend itself to every member of the House was the abolition of the office of Receiver-General. It was quite true there was very considerable advantage in having certain offices in an Administration that were not charged with a great amount of departmental duty, because it left the talents and abilities of such officers at the disposal of the Prime Minister on any great important measure with which they might be called to deal. But there was this fatal and insurmountable objection to offices in a Cabinet that did not necessarily involve great abilities in order to discharge the duties, that office was sought after by men who never should be Cabinet Ministers in Canada. The Cabinet of a country ought not to be larger than were the necessities of the country, and not larger than to include the smallest number of able men who were able to perform the duties. Therefore, it was mischievous in the highest degree to have any office in the Administration that did not require such ability as a Cabinet member of the Dominion of Canada should possess. The honour and character of the country was at stake in such matter, and the moment the Government had a Cabinet office recognized to be a sinecure, they were