

has attributed his defeat to the enactment known as the Gerrymander Act. Is that the case? There has been no Gerrymander Act passed since 1882. The very same Act is on the Statute-book to-day defining the limits of the various electoral districts which was on the Statute-book in 1882 and 1887.

Mr. MULLOCK. Was that a fair one?

Mr. FOSTER. From 1882 to the present there has not been a day in which political speeches have not been made by hon. gentlemen opposite challenging us to go before the people, and in no case did they insist on a previous repeal of the Gerrymander Act. But the astounding fact is this, that the very places in which they have been most badly routed are those sections of the Dominion—shreds and patches some may call them, but integral and important parts as I think—where the Gerrymander Act of 1882 has no footing. How do the Opposition account for their overwhelming defeat in British Columbia, the North-West and Manitoba? How do they account for the break made in their hitherto solid ranks in the little Island of Prince Edward? How do they account for the thirteen to three which New Brunswick sends up against them? How do they account for the strong contingent which Nova Scotia has sent against them? Can they account for all this by the Gerrymander Act? Not at all, because that Act had no force or effect in those sections. This, Sir, is simply a pretence to break their fall, to enable them to ease down, if possible, before the country the defeat which they experienced, instead of the triumph they so confidently asserted they would achieve at the polls. No, Mr. Speaker, you are not to look to the Gerrymander Act for the cause of their defeat. It lies deeper than that. You have to con their policy for the last five or ten years: you have to look to their so-called statesmanship; you have to consider their vacillating, wavering policy from 1878 to the present; you have to consider the stone which they vainly offered to the people instead of bread. These, and not the Gerrymander Act, are the causes of their defeat at the polls. The hon. gentlemen who have spoken have given as another reason of their defeat that the lists were not revised. Why, if any are entitled to complain of that they are the Conservative members. It is well known that the Conservatives had not attended to the lists, and if there was one cause for the boasted confidence of the Opposition before the elections it was, as they openly stated, that the lists were in their favour. Neither were they taken at any disadvantage. In 1887 they began their propaganda; and from 1887 to the time of the election not a month rolled by which did not find their members at work, in which their pamphlets were not circulated throughout the country, in which their orators were not holding forth on the stump, and in which their friends on the other side of the line were not keeping them provided with sinews of war. Taken at a disadvantage! Why, the hon. member for South Oxford was busy running through this country from one end of it to the other, six months before the election, and assuring his friends in the cities, as he came back from one country constituency after another, that there was a revolution abroad, that the whole people were up in arms against the Government policy, and that all the Liberal party had to do was to stand

together and they were certain of victory. Let the Government, he said, bring on the elections as soon as they please. Well, the elections were brought on, and the hopes of hon. gentlemen opposite have faded away; and now they seek for some paltry excuses to tone down their defeat. Well, I can tell hon. gentlemen opposite that so long as they cling to those methods they will not meet with success. I can tell them that until they meet in solemn, sensible conclave, and decide on a rational policy to lay before the people, a policy which will have the flavour of common sense and Canadian independence, they will remain where they are. Another ground of attack to-night on the Government has been the Washington negotiations. The hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) has not scrupled to say deliberately that a fraud was perpetrated upon His Excellency the Governor General and the Canadian people. On what does he base that charge? When you come to think of it, Sir, is it not one of the most absurd spectacles that could be imagined? My hon. friend is a statesman of many years' standing and of long experience, and, when he speaks, he is supposed to speak for his party. It is a historic party, a party which has a future before it of one kind or another, and you would think, Sir, that the hon. gentleman, before committing himself to so serious a public statement, would have had some definite information on which to base it. But what is the information on which he speaks? Mere suppositions, a bundle of extracts from various newspapers. Hour after hour he consumed in concocting possibilities, in devising imaginings, in seizing what this one and that has said, when, in the Speech from the Throne, there is the promise that if he will wait a day or two he will have the very papers and documents which will make all this matter plain. Is the hon. gentleman afraid of his case? Was he afraid that if he waited three or four days until these papers came down he would not be able to make the speech he has just made, and so decided to forestall the papers and get his surmises spread throughout the country before they could have a chance of being confronted by documentary truth. It does seem to me that a statesman of the experience of my hon. friend, a leader of his party, should have contained himself for a day or two until the documents were before him, when he could read them and base his criticisms on truth, and not on surmises and rumours gathered here and there. This he neglected to do, but rather of all possible odds and ends he has concocted a very nice theory, and he has come to the conclusion that we were all wrong, that we had no invitation to Washington, that we were kicked out, that we were humiliated, that we have prejudiced Canada in the face of the United States, and that, as I said before, nothing is left for us but to take his policy; and he is so kind and considerate as not to overwhelm us with any definite statement as to what that policy really is. If the hon. gentleman will allow me, I will say to him that it would be well for him to cultivate some faith in Canada and in the Canadian people. I know there is no man on the floor of this House, I do not think there is a man in public life in Canada to-day, who has said harder things of the yeomanry of Canada than that hon. gentleman. He distrusts them. He has no faith