

enge the hon. gentleman to name one single act of any description whatever in which I have failed to maintain, as best I could, with what little ability I possess, the best traditions of the Conservative party. Our principles to-day are the principles they have always been. Our policy to-day is the policy that made Canada what it is, and the hon. gentleman knows it. I say, therefore, that I listened in vain for any justification whatever for the course which the hon. gentleman has pursued. With all the want of confidence which he intimates he had in me, the hon. gentleman, as I said before, closed his mouth, as far as the mouth of an honourable man could be closed, against uttering one word to my discredit when he entered the Cabinet of which I was the head, at my invitation, and remained there as long as he was able to do so. What more? The hon. gentleman says that when certain of the gentlemen behind me were caballing to depose me from the leadership of the Conservative party, he was prepared to stand valiantly by my side and defend me against all comers. And yet, Sir, the hon. gentleman takes his seat without uttering one word that can justify an act on his part unparalleled in Canada, and unparalleled in any other country.

Now, Sir, I do not intend to say more than this, that so far as the hon. gentleman's seat is concerned, I did say, and I felt, that the hon. gentleman had made an exhibition that never has been paralleled in this House nor in the House of Commons of England nor in any other place where parliamentary institutions are respected, by voting against his party without one word of explanation. Then, having found that those with whom he was associated overlooked that act, and did not challenge him, he asks, why did we not attack the hon. member for North Victoria (Mr. Hughes) for voting against us on the Yukon question? Why do we not attack gentlemen for voting against us on any question? We do not attack them because under our system of government it is open to men, on whichever side of the House they sit, to differ, and conscientiously differ, from their party on important questions. But on the question which the hon. gentleman selected, there was a deep significance in the position he took that he would leave the Conservative side of the House and go into the ranks of that party who will not permit official misconduct to be properly and thoroughly investigated. I do not intend to follow that matter further at this moment, for very sufficient reasons; but when I do take it up, I will not deal with the hon. gentleman who has been so anxious to place a respectable distance between us, in which desire I sympathize most heartily. This seat, Sir, the seat he occupied in this House, was not his. It was mine. He occupied that seat in virtue of having been a colleague of mine in the late Administration. He was placed there by me, and the moment he was prepared to abandon me and the party and

his old associations, he was bound to leave that seat, his occupancy of which prevented that intercommunication between old colleagues which is absolutely necessary; and he was bound to regard the slightest hint that it was only reasonable to place a considerable distance between us in future.

Now, Sir, I have never had in my public life a more painful duty to discharge than that which I have had to discharge to-day. Not because I regret the loss of the hon. gentleman or his defection from the party which I lead. I think we can stand that, and a great deal more; but I am afraid, after the threat that has been held out to me, that I shall have to crave from you, Mr. Speaker, the protection of the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort me to my home, for fear of that condign punishment which the hon. gentleman seems to desire to inflict upon me. An octogenarian, as my hon. friend the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Russell) says—a valetudinarian, as the hon. gentleman says I am—I think I am able to take care of myself even in that conflict. I will not say more. In saying those few words, I have discharged perhaps the most painful duty of my public life, and one I trust I shall never be called on to discharge again during the brief period that remains to me.

Mr. JOHN ROSS ROBERTSON (East Toronto). I have listened with not a little interest, and, I confess, some curiosity, to the statement of the hon. member for Victoria, N.B. (Mr. Costigan). The making of such a statement was not unexpected, for his last political move, his desertion of the party with which he has been allied, as he himself states, for thirty-eight years past, demanded some explanation. His flitting from one political side of this House to the other may give joy to hon. gentlemen opposite, yet I have reason to believe that the loss of this side is not looked on as a great Liberal gain. The hon. member for Victoria, N.B., has gone up and down the gamut of his political life, and his explanation embraces not only a criticism regarding his late political friends, but he has also seen fit to draw into the lines of discussion the opinions expressed upon his actions by the newspaper press, and more especially by the Toronto "Evening Telegram." He referred to the editorial opinions expressed by that journal, and was also, good enough to say, that there is no artist with skill enough to portray my face on paper. But there is no doubt in my mind that the artist makes a dead shot every time he gets his pencil at the face of the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman must be aware, as a public man, that his acts, whether as a private member or when he was a Minister of the Crown, are fair subjects for newspaper comment; and, from all the hon. gentleman has given us this afternoon as an excuse for his desertion, I am inclined to think that the newspaper press have not dealt unfairly with him. I am not here, however, to jus-

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