

plead, if they vote against this motion, but that they have sanctioned the very thing I propose to condemn. I have purposely abstained from going into many details which I might go into, because I thought it was not necessary to give many examples. I did not wish to carry the matter further than I thought was imperatively necessary in order to bring the case fully before the House. I, therefore, move that you do not now leave the Chair, but that it be resolved that all the words after "That" be expunged and the following substituted in lieu thereof:—

The acceptance of gifts or testimonials of any kind on the part of Ministers of the Crown or of any member of their families from contractors, Government officials, or other persons having pecuniary relations with the Government is entirely opposed to sound principles of administration, and is calculated to bring parliamentary government into contempt, and that the example thus given tends to corrupt and demoralize the officials serving under Ministers who have accepted or permitted the acceptance of gifts or testimonials as aforesaid.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I desire to say a few words in reference to this matter and to express the views in regard to it which are entertained by members on this side of the House and particularly by members of the Administration. We have to consider this resolution in connection with the remarks which have been made by the hon. member for South Oxford, some of which certainly commend his resolution to our acceptance, and some of which make us regret that the proposition to express an abstract principle should be put before the House accompanied by statements likely to arouse hostility, likely to arouse animosity out of past transactions, and likely, perhaps, to lead to a misapprehension among those who are not well informed as to some of the transactions of the past. Now, referring, first, to the observations of the member for South Oxford which, it seemed to me, were hardly necessary to be expressed this afternoon, and which are calculated to arouse the feelings I have mentioned, I would refer to what he said with regard to the testimonial which was presented many years ago to the late First Minister. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comparative moderation with which the hon. gentleman spoke with regard to some of those transactions, notwithstanding that I deplore that he did make comments upon that and other transactions which are to be regretted. The hon. gentleman evidently spoke under a certain measure of self-restraint, especially considering that some to whom he referred were on terms of active political hostility with him, extending over a long period of years. But as one member of this Administration, and I think I am speaking for my colleagues—I must say with regard to the testimonial presented to the late Sir John A. Macdonald, which was so long ago as upwards of 20 years, that that matter has been so well discussed, so well ventilated, and so well considered in Parliament and throughout this country, that there ought to be no misapprehension about it, and there ought to be no association of any incident connected with it, with observations condemning a practice which the hon. gentleman asks the House to declare should be condemned, as likely to lead to corruption. I think the hon. member for South Oxford felt impelled, in introducing his observations in regard to that testimonial, presented, as I have said, upwards of 20 years ago—I think his innate sense of justice compelled him to admit that that testimonial was

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prompted by honourable feeling and could be accepted without the slightest stain upon the honour of the great public man to whom it was presented. The hon. gentleman admitted, for example, that the impulse which led to the gathering of that testimonial and its presentation to Sir John A. Macdonald, was due to the fact that at that moment he was supposed to be upon his death-bed, he was supposed to be about to close a career which had been magnificent for Canada and for British America, and the testimonial was about to be presented to him under a general impression that his family needed the provision which grateful fellow-countrymen could make for them, and which the patriotism and self-sacrifice of the head of that family had prevented him from securing for them. I might refer to another circumstance to convince the House, as I am myself convinced, that the hon. gentleman felt that he should not throw the slightest stain upon the memory of Sir John A. Macdonald, in connection with that transaction, or to impute any tendency even, with regard to that testimonial, to corrupt those who were connected with the late Sir John Macdonald's department; for, if I am not mistaken, it is a matter of fact that the hon. member for South Oxford himself was one of the contributors to that testimonial. Now, Sir, I beg to say further, that this is not the first time that this subject has been discussed in this House by any means. I beg to call the attention of the House to the fact that after that testimonial had been presented, and after some bitterness had been aroused in consequence of the keen and critical state of politics in this country at that time, an enquiry into all the transactions connected with the testimonial was conducted by a committee of this House, with a result which has ever since been satisfactory to this Parliament and to this country. So much for that particular instance. I must refer now, very briefly indeed, to another instance which the hon. gentleman gave—the instance of the testimonial to the ex-Minister of Public Works. The hon. member for South Oxford forebore, himself, to criticize in terms of great severity the conduct of the ex-Minister of Public Works in accepting that testimonial, or the conduct of those who joined in making it; but he read to the House some words which he thought would commend themselves to members upon this side of the House on account of the great authority of the gentleman from whom they came. Well, Sir, with regard to those observations which were put forward in a past session by the Hon. Edward Blake upon that question, I have this to say: That Mr. Blake's abilities and Mr. Blake's services are admired by many members on both sides of the House; but the hon. gentleman need not suppose that we are to accept everything that Mr. Blake has said in the bitterness of a political conflict—and no man could be more bitter, and at times more unjust than he—merely because since then that gentleman has assumed an attitude of the most direct hostility, upon some public questions, to the gentleman with whom, and over whom, and under whom, he formerly served. When a public man upon the other side of the House undertakes to make statements against the policy of his party, and when he undertakes to warn the country against the policy of his party, we have a right to quote his opinions, and to give them all their due weight, without being saddled with the responsibility of everything that gentleman has