

House which asks that we stand adjourned for four days. The First Minister has not given us the reasons that moved him to make that request.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Yes, he has.

Mr. MULLOCK. He has stated that he desires to reorganize the Cabinet, but he has not shown how the meeting of the House will embarrass him in that important work. The leader of the House says that it will serve the convenience of members if we adjourn. But what are we assembled at Ottawa for? Does Parliament exist for the convenience of members, or for the discharge of public duty? I was under the impression that our public duty was the first obligation upon us until this new doctrine is now laid down for our guidance. The leader of the House tells us that the situation is unparalleled. I admit that. It is not the first strike that has happened within the last few months in this Cabinet. The striking was inaugurated a few months ago by the late Minister of Justice. He struck. He returned to his allegiance for a short time, and, on being taken back, when he gave the bad example, that three months afterwards three other members of the Ministry went on strike. Two of them returned. To-day seven of them have followed that example, and perhaps want to return also. Is it to the interest of the country that we should facilitate this work of rebellion in the Cabinet? Not a gentleman charged has arisen to dispute or deny the charge of conspiracy. If there is a conspiracy against the liberties of the people, on what institution can the people depend for the defence of their liberties? The House of Commons? The House of Commons is the only instrument now existing to guard the rights of the people. The constitution demands that the House of Commons shall, every moment of time from now till this crisis is over, be in session to guard, if needs be, a weak Premier. We saw the late Finance Minister forty-eight hours ago arise in his place in this House and read a carefully prepared document discrediting the ability of his First Minister.

Mr. LANDERKIN. And his own, too.

Mr. MULLOCK. And he told us that he had only made that discovery after the Address from the Throne had been presented to Parliament. Sir, the flimsy excuse offered for the crisis that now exists discredits, in my judgment, the honesty of purpose of the Administration. A year ago as Premier they selected Sir Mackenzie Bowell. Not a stranger. He had been in public life for a generation. He had been a colleague of these gentlemen for a dozen years. He had been working side by side with them in the councils of the country, on the public platform, in Parliament—in every position which would enable them to test his capacity to fill the high office of

Premier. When they took office under him thirteen months ago, did they not know as well as they know to-day his fitness for that office? How comes it that after thirteen months the late Finance Minister suddenly discovers that the First Minister lacked capacity for administering the affairs of the country? And what was the evidence the hon. gentleman furnished? That seven colleagues of the First Minister in the Cabinet were so rebellious that he could not keep them in order—that he could not extract from them that degree of usefulness to which the country was entitled; and their disobedience, their rebellious spirit, their treasonable conduct against the country, is the cause they assign. Instead of the First Minister being removed, these hon. gentlemen have overreached themselves and have removed themselves; and the highest interests of the country demand that these men, who have for the moment gone into the shade of a position they do not like, outside of the emoluments of office, shall be allowed to continue to enjoy that position. Mr. Speaker, we hear a great deal as to who is to succeed the First Minister if this conspiracy succeeds. They wish a change of allegiance, they wish to abandon King Log and serve under King Stork. However that may be, they feel for the moment that they are outside of the vineyard, and feeling that they have failed through the infirmity of their leader, they think, in the language of the blind poet, that they can wait in this outer place until some greater man restores them to the promised land. Such is their object in asking that Parliament shall now adjourn till Tuesday next. Sir, the circumstances of the case do not warrant us in allowing this conspiracy to succeed. It is a conspiracy most foul; no one has dared to stand up in this House and justify it. I ask the Finance Minister if he can tell us how these seven Ministers came to arrive at the conclusion, only forty-eight hours after Parliament assembled, that the First Minister was unfit for his place, and how came it that they did not find that out twelve months ago? Why did they not find it out nine months ago, when the ex-Minister of Justice struck? How comes it that in July last they did not find out his incapacity? How comes it that not until Parliament assembles and the Address from the Throne is delivered, and the affairs of the country are in a most critical state, have they decided almost to demand the surrender of the First Minister from his high office? Sir, the names of the men who have done that act will go down with dishonour to the history of our country. They have sought to destroy the usefulness of a public man who to that moment enjoyed the confidence of His Excellency. Sir, I ask in what position would the First Minister be were he to appeal to the country now, with the solemn written statement of his seven colleagues that he was unfit to take charge