

ments, that the people of Canada will make up their minds that the French treaty will be of very little value to them. I trust however that it may prove more useful to Canada than it appears on the surface. However, we will wait with interest the debate which will occur on this question. But I referred to the two ministers merely in view of the very natural curiosity of the people of this country to know who really compose this cabinet. In recent years there have been several changes in that cabinet, for divers reasons which I will not mention. But let any one compare the cabinet of 1896 with the cabinet of 1907, and he will see at once the sad deterioration that has taken place so far as quality is concerned. So far as quantity is concerned, we remember that while in days gone by the Liberal opposition severely condemned the Conservative government for having too many ministers and over-governing the country, as soon as the Liberal government came in they immediately went to work and increased the number of ministers by two.

I cannot admire the spirit of gratitude of the Prime Minister. He did not exhibit a marked amount of gratitude when, in 1896, he passed over his tried and true colleagues, those who had sat side by side and shoulder to shoulder with him during his eighteen long years of travelling in the wilderness of opposition, and who naturally looked for their reward when the plums came to be distributed. But the new Prime Minister said to them, in common parlance, go away back and sit down, you do not possess the requisites, you are not of cabinet material; you may be all right as privates in the ranks, to do menial work, but when I make up my cabinet I will hie me to the provincial arenas. So he did, and he took in the Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia, the Premier of New Brunswick, the Premier of Ontario and the Attorney General of Manitoba. He has recently brought into his cabinet gentlemen who did not even occupy seats in this House, notwithstanding his large following in the House, and conferred upon them cabinet rank to the slighting of his old supporters who had stood at his back for so many years. While I say that I cannot admire the Prime Minister's spirit of gratefulness in passing over his friends who have faithfully stood by him so long, we must say that in forming his first cabinet he had, comparatively speaking, a fairly strong government. But when we compare it with his present government we may well apply the scriptural quotation: 'There were giants in those days.'

Now, Sir, we are also promised some needed amendments to the Election Act. No doubt amendments are sadly needed for the purpose of remedying the disgraceful proceedings that have been carried on in our country during the last few elections. We have seen a trained band of experts in ballot switching, ballot substitution, ballot

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manipulation, whose duty it was to go round from constituency to constituency and rob the people of their franchise. Is it not enough to make every honest Canadian, irrespective of party, hang his head in shame when he observes the degradation of our political methods, and especially when he takes up the journals of the motherland and reads the uncomplimentary references to our Canadian political methods? What a spectacle we had in this House only a few sessions ago! We had evidence that the constituencies of Brockville and West Huron were stolen from the Conservative candidate by such methods. The leader of the opposition attempted to place the people in possession of this information. In the discharge of his duties he brought this matter to the House, and moved a reference of all these matters to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. The Prime Minister, apparently sincere, made a declaration of his willingness to have that done.

If a wrong was done he said I want that wrong remedied. If any one has been guilty of these crimes they should be brought to justice. The matter was referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, and a condition of affairs was revealed there, that had the Prime Minister known it in advance, I venture to say that he never would have agreed to the adoption of the motion of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition. But the session closing before that matter could be completed, the leader of the opposition, the following session, renewed his motion and then what do we see?—the Prime Minister rising in his place—he had a new light in the interval, pressure had, no doubt, been brought to bear by some of his following to, for Heaven's sake, stop this exposure which was bringing disgrace not only upon the country but especially on the party and calling upon his following to vote down the resolution which he had agreed to the preceding session. When the Prime Minister of His Majesty's premier colony did that, we were inclined to ask ourselves the question: Are we in autocratic Russia or in democratic Canada? We despaired for the future of our country. It is all very well for the Prime Minister to deplore as he did last year bribery and corruption and he especially condemned ballot switching, but, Sir, I hold that the Prime Minister as chief of the executive of this country, and his colleagues, have done more to lower the tone of political morality in Canada than any other man or men. Why do I say that? Simply because the records of the country will bear me out in that declaration. He might have if he had brought the parties to the bar of justice at the outset saved a repetition of these notorious actions, but he threw the mantle of charity over them and he even protected those who were guilty of these crimes. Take St. James division, Montreal, where my hon. friend from Beauharnois