

my astonishment, a page was sent to tell me that Mr. Charlton had commenced his arraignment of the Government.

Mr. CHARLTON—I desire to make a personal explanation. When I sent the hon. gentleman a note from Knox's church, I did not anticipate being here this afternoon, and I considered, as a matter of course, that no opportunity would occur to go on with the question until to-morrow. There is a misunderstanding between the hon. gentleman and myself as to what passed between us after dinner. I understood the hon. gentleman to express a preference to go on with the question to-morrow. The debate on the Home Rule matter was then in progress, and I did not anticipate myself there would be any opportunity to go into this subject to-night; but I asked the hon. gentleman what was his preference, but I made, as I understood, no statement of my own. I should have preferred going on with the question to-morrow, but certain circumstances render it desirable that I should leave the city. My father is very ill, and I have been detained here against my will and am anxious to leave; and for that reason, believing it would make no difference to the Minister of the Interior, not knowing that the matter could go on, when a conclusion was unexpectedly reached to the debate on Home Rule, I took the floor.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell)—All I can say is that I have very great sympathy with the hon. gentleman in the cause which is likely to lead him to leave town. But I am very glad indeed that the matter of the arrangement as to the first part is in writing, because after I had spoken to him, and it was perfectly understood since dinner that this subject would not come up to-day, the hon. gentleman approached the leader of the Opposition and spoke to him, whether on this subject or another I cannot say, but the probability is that the leader of the Opposition told him to go on to-night. That is briefly what really occurred, notwithstanding the arrangement to which I have referred.

Mr. CHARLTON—I propose a solution of the difficulty by the hon. gentleman addressing the House, and he can go on to-morrow.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell)—I propose to do nothing of the kind. I have no objection to going on, and I would just as readily

have gone on to-night if the hon. gentleman had frankly said so when he returned, because I took the trouble to go and speak to him. The only thing that I object to is that, when arrangements are made between hon. gentlemen on both sides they should be broken; the question of whether or not arrangements at all should be made is within the option of either side. In view of the fact that this is a question affecting the personal character of a number of members of this House, who had a right to some information as to when it was to be brought up, I think it was hardly fair on the part of the hon. gentleman, after having made the arrangement, that he should have gone on with the matter to-night. That is, however, a matter of no great consequence as affecting the question itself. The hon. gentleman commenced his speech by referring to what he feared was

THE CONDITION OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT

in this country. He feared very much that the public conscience was being blunted and that the public estimate of wrong-doing was becoming lessened in consequence of the general corruption which prevailed in our public life. All I have to say to the hon. gentleman is this, that if that is the case in any way whatever, it is just such speeches as he delivered to-night that are producing that result. When the public find that the charges which are hurled against hon. gentlemen on this side have no better foundation than the mere fact that they write a letter to the department asking for something for a friend which that friend had a right, under the law, to get, when the hon. gentleman lays it down as a sin, as a corrupt act, as something to be denounced, and in relation to which the public conscience should be roused, that such letters as he quoted to-night are offences against propriety, I do not wonder that the public conscience becomes indifferent to the charges which come from that side of the house, and that there is danger, as undoubtedly there is, of the public conscience becoming blunted in regard to even more serious matters. (Hear, hear.) Sir, I recognize as much as anybody can do the importance of the public conscience in relation to the conduct of public men. I recognize as much as anybody can do the importance of every public

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