

practical working of the Government for five years, did nothing of that kind, he has had the satisfaction already of seeing the burden of taxation reduced with reference to these articles that I mention, to the tune of \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000, which sum has been taken permanently off the shoulders of the people: and he will have the satisfaction, if he lives long enough and stays where he is on that side of the House, of seeing even more done by this Government in pursuance of its policy of diminishing the burdens and increasing the happiness of the people of Canada.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I ask the indulgence of hon. members while I address to the House a few observations upon the conduct of the Administration which is now in power, and upon the policy which the hon. gentleman, who has just taken his seat, has defined on the floor of this House. I have no doubt whatever that His Excellency acted wisely, in the present constitution of Parliament, in selecting the hon. gentleman, who is Minister of Justice, to take charge of the Administration. I have no doubt whatever that he is better qualified for that position, than any other hon. gentleman whom His Excellency has called to his council, and so I have no fault to find with the course which His Excellency has taken in asking the hon. gentleman to constitute an Administration. I was somewhat surprised to find, that the hon. gentleman had advised His Excellency to bring into operation a statute which, although enacted in a former parliament, remained for a number of years, in abeyance on the Statute-book. It seemed to me at the time that statute was carried through this House, that it was not a wise measure, not one in the public interest, not one suited to the circumstances of a democratic country, such as Canada is. I can well understand how, in a country like England, where society is segregated into orders, and where a large number of men of great fortune are anxious that their sons, who are disposed to take part in public life, should have an opportunity of serving a species of apprenticeship in subordinate offices of Government, such a system may prevail; but in a country like this, where we are, so to speak, on a footing of equality, where the differences are differences of intellectual endowment and of opportunity, it does seem to me that it is some reflection either upon the capacity of the party, or upon the capacity of the individuals selected for those subordinate offices which have been created. It is a declaration that those parties who are selected to fill those offices are parties not qualified to assume the higher degree of responsibility that attaches to a seat in the Cabinet, and that they are properly and fairly dealt with in being assigned positions of a subordinate character. In England there are subordinate offices of Government; and when we remember that, although there are not more at any time than

Mr. FOSTER.

fifteen Cabinet Ministers, there are more than fifty members of the Administration, we can well understand how it is that positions of an inferior character and of inferior responsibility, should be created in the Administration. We understand also how it is that a Minister there, has an opportunity of selecting an assistant, a parliamentary subordinate, who usually represents the department to which the chief belongs in the House of which his chief is not a member. That rule has not been followed here. I observe, further, in the arrangement made, and in the report which you, Mr. Speaker, have laid on the Table of the House, that certain members of the Administration have not upon the acceptance of office vacated their seats. It was stated, Sir, by you, that the two subordinate Ministers of the Crown, in this House had resigned their seats. Whether that resignation took place before their appointment, or whether that resignation accompanied their appointment, I do not know. Your report, Mr. Speaker, does not inform the House. But this much is perfectly clear: under the provisions of the law if they had not previously resigned their seats, their seats became vacant by acceptance of office under the Crown; and so becoming vacant by operation of the law, they were not in a position to tender their resignations. I think we should not allow a report of this sort to pass unnoticed, because if the Minister of Justice and his colleagues are to regard this as a voluntary act on the part of those two hon. gentlemen, then the same offices might be filled at any subsequent time without any resignations. It is perfectly clear to my mind, as I think it will to any hon. gentleman who will carefully read the statute, that those are offices of emolument under the Crown, which, when accepted, like any other office, vacates the seat of any member accepting the same. What the statute does, is to take those two offices out of the class the holders of which are absolutely disqualified and rendered ineligible for election, and to make the parties accepting them, once more eligible for election, and in this respect putting them on the footing of Cabinet Ministers. This will be evident to any one who will look at sections 6 and 7 of the statute. Section 6 says:

Nothing in section 9 and of the Act respecting the Senate and House of Commons, or in this or any other Act shall render the Controller of Customs or the Controller of Inland Revenue ineligible as a member of the House of Commons, or shall disqualify him from sitting or voting therein.

It does not say he shall not vacate his seat. It is clear that is the effect of the Act respecting the Senate and House of Commons. What that section says is, notwithstanding the fact that the seat shall be vacant, the party is not ineligible, but is qualified to offer himself as a candidate to be returned to Parliament, and to sit and vote when so returned if a member of the House of Commons. That is rendered more clear by the section which follows, which says: