

the rule which I may say in all modesty I have followed myself. When I was called upon in 1896 to form a cabinet, I went out of the representation to select the very best material that I could get. I went out to Nova Scotia and I asked my hon. friend near me, the Hon. Mr. Fielding, to join the administration. He was not in the representation at that time, he accepted and not a word of complaint was uttered and I have had nothing but satisfaction ever since for having invited him to join the government. I went to the province of Ontario and I selected that veteran, Sir Oliver Mowat—and I never had any cause to regret it. I went into the province of New Brunswick and I asked my friend the late hon. Mr. Blair. Now, I have had many differences with Mr. Blair, but I am glad to say, though he cannot hear me, that I never regretted having called him to the cabinet. He was an able man, a strong man—I knew later how strong a man he was, but I must say that in all my differences with Mr. Blair I never had with him a word which I can regret. I am glad to say that to the day of his death I remained his friend and he remained my friend. I went to the west and I took Mr. Sifton, and a more able man could not have been selected. There are able men in this House whom I could have called to the position, but every man in this House has had this much confidence in me, that no one ever questioned my judgment under such circumstances.

The hon. gentleman thinks that there are men on this side of the House who are very much mortified because they have been passed over. Let me say to my hon. friend that Liberals are not like Conservatives, and that if he judges the members on this side by the members on his own side, he need not waste any sympathy upon us. No one on this side of the House feels any anger or jealousy at what I have done in this matter. It may be that there is jealousy on the other side, but it is confined to that side. There is none on this side.

My hon. friend took some exception also to the fact that we had appointed members of parliament to the Senate and to the bench. We appointed Mr. Laurence, formerly member for Colchester, to be a judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Why did we appoint him to that position? We did so because we thought he was eminently fitted to discharge the duties of that important office. I do not myself know Mr. Laurence very well. I saw him in this House and formed a very high opinion of him, but I had on one occasion last session a certificate of character given of him, which I did not forget, by a prominent member of the bar of Nova Scotia, who was therefore in a position to know Mr. Laurence's qualifications, and he told us that out of a number of men named we

might very well appoint Mr. Laurence; and that gentleman was the distinguished member for Carleton, the present leader of the opposition.

The hon. member stated that it has been a rule maintained by the Liberal party that no member of the House of Commons should be appointed to a high office unless he had been out of parliament for at least two years. May I ask my hon. friend when that was a rule of the Liberal party? He will not find it in any platform of the Liberal party that I know of. Perhaps it will not be bumptious on my part to say that after all I have something to do with the policy of the Liberal party, and I defy my hon. friend or any of his friends to find a word of mine in favour of such a policy. I know of one man only in the ranks of the Liberal party who at one time and at one time only held that opinion. That was my friend Sir William Mulock, who introduced a Bill—I forget in what session.

Mr. BERGERON. 1895.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Perhaps in 1895.

Mr. LENNOX. In two sessions.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No, only in one session, if I remember rightly. He introduced a Bill, but that Bill never went to its second reading, because the feeling on both sides of the House was overwhelmingly against it. Sir, it is not in accordance with the traditions of British parliamentary government that members of the House of Commons should not be appointed to office. On the contrary, it is one of the traditions of the British parliamentary system of government that certain important officials should go from the House of Commons to the bench. As a matter of fact, the Attorney General always goes up to the bench when there is a vacancy; so as a rule does the Solicitor General; and I do not know that there is anything wrong done by the government when we appoint to the bench men from the floor of the House of Commons. If we compare the records of the two parties on this point, I think they are about equal. If there is anything more wrong on one side than on the other, I am ready to take all the blame, if wrong there be; but I do not consider it to be wrong. As to the character of the gentlemen whom we have appointed to the Senate, I think they are all good men. My hon. friend asked if they had resigned before they were appointed. I stated very frankly that I did not know at what time their resignations came; but I did not make such appointments without having communication with my friends beforehand and ascertaining whether they would accept such a high office. My hon. friend may say that this was undue precaution. At all events, I met with no refusal.