

colleagues, and that those reasons are entirely different from the one he has given to-day. Sir, I am glad of the limitation which he put to the statement when he opened to-day, that the official statement he was reading had the imprimatur and sanction of His Excellency. I say I was glad of the qualification he put in, so far as that statement affected His Excellency's position; because the statement which he read, outside of that one qualification, was a statement contending that to be a fact which was untrue—unless he is prepared to accept the view that the ex-Finance Minister read a false statement the other day. One statement directly contradicts the other. In the statement read the other day we were told that notwithstanding the fact that they joined his Government with very many misgivings, because they doubted whether the Premier was equal to the occasion, although they had unitedly and loyally striven to make it strong, they found that the Premier was too weak a man, too incompetent a leader, to give courage to his followers and to form a strong Government, and they left him on that account. Sir, although clothed in diplomatic and euphemistic language, it meant this: The present leader of the Government was an incompetent and an imbecile, and that is the reason they left, and that is the reason that appears before the eyes of the country in language which anybody accustomed to read between the lines, can clearly understand. But to-day the hon. gentleman does not scruple to come down and ask this House to believe, with the echo of the language used by the Finance Minister still ringing in our ears, that his statement was false, and that the real reason they left was that it was a matter of public interest. Why, Sir, is it not time that this system of public deception should cease, and that this House, at least, should be treated with the respect due to the representatives of the people, and told the truth? Why, Sir, the ship of state—if I may be allowed to use a maritime expression, coming as I do from a maritime part of the Dominion—started out a year ago under this hon. gentleman, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, tight, staunch and strong, and reputed to be in every respect, seaworthy. What did we see? We saw the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) while she was rolling in the deep seas of remedial legislation, suddenly bolt, run away from the ship, desert her, and, as my hon. friend beside me said, sulk in his tent for two or three days, and was it public interest that drove the hon. gentleman out? Did he leave because he could not agree with the policy of the Government? No explanations have ever been vouchsafed to us here; but the hon. gentleman was led back by the ear two or three days afterwards, and told to be a good boy, and he came back whipped into line, looking very sheepish for several days here.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.)

not able to open his mouth, and never to this day has he had pluck to stand up and tell us why he left. But I will tell them what he had the pluck to do, and this I will give him credit for; he is about the only one of the English-speaking members of the Government who has had the pluck to say what the policy of the Government really is on the subject of remedial legislation. He said it on the floor of this House, and he said it in Antigonish, and I believe he repeated the same statement in Cardwell. But did anybody ever hear the Finance Minister say anything, that was not equivocal and capable of leaving a retreat open for him, as to what the object was? Never. I will do the hon. gentleman from Pictou that justice at least, that he had a policy, and he had the pluck to say what it was. But, Sir, after he ran away from the ship, signed articles and ran away, and was brought back by the ear, he remained here for some time in the Government until this big bolt came. But when the big ship was rolling, as I say, with its cargo of remedial legislation on board, then came what my hon. friend described as the great bolt of the three members. Well, Sir, I thought they were sincere. Everybody thought the Postmaster General must be sincere, because he was known to be a man who based his public life upon principle. There are other men who might be open to the accusation, there are other men in this House who might be open to the accusation, that other motives than public interest prompted them to take this extraordinary course; but did ever anybody hear that the hon. Postmaster General was accused of that? We all knew that when he went out, accompanied by that bold lion, who sits behind him, we all knew that the hon. gentleman meant business. He went out upon principle, he went out because he thought the interest of his compatriots was being—not lost, but sold, sacrificed; and he remained out two or three days with a very bold face on, and he came back as a cat to lick the milk again, humbled, tamed, subdued, if I may repeat the language of my leader. He has remained there ever since, whipped into line. One lesson was enough for him, and I do not think anybody will ever catch him going out of the Government again, no matter what is at stake. But to-day I call his attention to the fact that his colleague, who had the pluck and manliness to go out on principle—a view of the principle in which I myself do not agree with at all—but he who went out on that principle believing that he was right, to-day has the respect of all honest men, French and English; while those who went out professedly on principle and came back, sacrificing their principle, have earned the contempt of all honest men. I hope if he has respect for public life at all, if he has respect for the high models of public life which he says we ought to follow in England, he