

occurred or what did not occur in the Legislature of Ontario. Well, Sir, time and again have these circumstances been discussed and the facts been stated, but time and again have they been repeated. The President of the Council has appealed to one election, when he says he was elected notwithstanding the accusations he made against the Minister of Railways. Well, I am not sure that it was not a point in his favor that he made them. However, the hon. gentleman appeals to that election as a proof that he did right—I do not know whether in making or in retracting the accusations. If I wished to use a similar argument, I might refer to half-a-dozen elections in which, whether as a member of a Government or a party, I have been successful; but I do not choose to appeal to them. I will simply say, as I did on a former occasion, when the hon. Minister of Railways made a similar accusation, that the statement he makes is utterly without foundation in fact; and I will add, as I did then, that if there be, if you can inform me of any more strong and cogent form of denial consistent with parliamentary usage, I wish to be understood as having used that form. As there are here, however, some hon. gentlemen who were not present the last time this subject was discussed, and who may not be aware of the circumstances under which the letter, or rather the note, the hon. gentleman has referred to was written, I will state briefly—though not at all with the hope that that slander will cease to be circulated because of my statement—how far, by a perversion of the facts and the dates, the hon. gentleman deceives himself by his reference to that note. The facts are briefly these: On a certain day—I cannot at this moment recollect the precise day of the week—the Treasurer of the Local Administration of Ontario had declared in the Local Legislature his resignation of his office. He had declared that he had resigned because he was convinced by repeated votes which had been given in the House, that the Government had lost the confidence of the country, and that it was not consistent with the principles of constitutional Government that they should longer protract the struggle, or attempt to retain office. The Government, however, did protract the struggle, and the debate continued. It was either on the following day or the day after, shortly after the House opened after dinner, that the Treasurer came to me—who was at that time the *de facto* leader of the House, having control of its deliberations by having a majority at my back—and said to me: “Mr. Blake, I have been attacked for my action in announcing my resignation, and I intend to speak before this debate closes. Do you think it will close to-night? If you do not, I would rather not speak until to-morrow.” I said to Mr. Wood: “My opinion is that the debate will not close to-night.” At a later period—an hour or two later—I perceived signs of the debate collapsing; and having made that statement to Mr. Wood, and he sitting in his seat, relying apparently on his belief that the debate would hold over till the next day, I scribbled on a sheet of paper the words: “You had better speak now,” and sent it across the floor of the House to Mr. Wood, who, having read these words, tore up the paper and cast it aside. Some adherent of hon. gentlemen opposite—and it has always been credited to a prominent adherent—picked it up and used it.

An hon. MEMBER. Out of a spittoon.

MR. BLAKE. Yes, I believe it was out of a spittoon. That is the state of the case. It is clear and simple, and effectually disposes of the accusation the hon. gentleman has made against me; and yet I have no doubt that it will continue to be repeated, with the false statements as to the dates and times, and the notion that I had arranged with Mr. Wood to make his resignation speech, when his resignation speech had been made either one or two days before that paper was written at all, and when it

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was written under the circumstances to which I have referred. The hon. President of the Council has said that he has won his seat, and that having won his seat he is assailed from all charges. I know of none that have been made against him except that he knows his colleague. But certainly those who, like me, have had cast so wantonly at them the aspersion that they were looking about for constituencies which they might bribe to elect them, may fairly, on this occasion, retort on the hon. gentlemen the enquiry what the Gloucester election cost. The hon. Minister of Agriculture also intervened, and declared that my conduct had been such as to cast discredit on myself and party. He and the hon. Minister of Customs alike made great complaint of my having, in some two or three cases, I forget the exact number, not voted, and in some two or three other cases voted with hon. gentlemen opposite. I suppose that in the different circumstances in which these abstentions or irregular votes took place, when I voted with the hon. gentlemen or did not vote against them they thought they were right in the propositions they advanced and which they then supported. If it was my misfortune either to disagree with them or to doubt, surely it is not a thing for either grave or serious commentary. Surely I could not be so very wrong in their view when I was so close to them. But I will say now what I have said, on former occasions, when I had the honor of occupying the position of leader of the party, long ago to my followers, what I have repeated to my followers since, that I have never asked or never will ask from any man who does me the honor to follow me, any closer or stricter allegiance than I am willing myself to give to another man. I am not willing, in any case whatever, to ask a follower to vote contrary to the conviction of his duty, and am not willing myself, on any occasion, to vote contrary to my convictions of my duty. The hon. Minister of Agriculture used various harsh words about me. He said I endeavored to trip up my hon. friend from Lambton, to belittle him, to undermine him, to intrigue against him—that I did dirty things. The hon. Minister of Customs said I was not content until I had obtained the position which I now occupy. I meet those statements with the same absolute and unqualified denial. I absolve any person, whoever he may be, or whatever station he may occupy, from any supposed or implied obligation of confidence or silence. I call upon any person, who can establish any such imputation, to come forward and say what he knows. Those who surround me here know that I did not crave or desire, that I do not to-day covet, the position which I am occupying. They know that I did not intrigue for it; that it has never been the object of my aspirations at all; and that if I now fill it, it is because they desire I should continue to do so. I am at their service willingly as one of themselves; but I have always said to them, as I say to you in this House, that I am very unwillingly, indeed, at their service in the place I now hold. The hon. Minister of Customs is not content with referring to the circumstances which have attended my occupying this place, but said that I undermined the position of my hon. friend Mr. McKellar also. Why I was responsible for his having held that position, having myself proposed the appointment of Mr. McKellar as leader of the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature. I procured his appointment from my friends, and when the change was made it was Mr. McKellar himself who called his friends together in my absence, without my knowledge, and asked of them that substitution which he afterwards communicated to me and requested me as a favor to accept, and we have always been on the most cordial, intimate and friendly terms ever since. What I did, I did not merely with his consent, but at his request and instance. I have answered, as far as I could gather them, the personal charges made against me. I trust I have not intermingled with those answers much acrimony or acerbity. In truth, I have been injured to those charges. They have been so often repeated that the pain