

to the representatives of the people in parliament in this respect. My right hon. friend in the course of his discussion showed himself to be what in days gone by he described as a scrap-book orator of the first water. But it is certainly refreshing to find that he has not only gone back fifteen or twenty years for the purpose of bringing matters to the attention of this House which are more or less irrelevant, but he has gone back about two hundred and fifty years for his ideas of constitutional government.

I would like to explain to my right hon. friend, in the first instance, lest there should be any misunderstanding on the subject, that this cabinet was not constituted with the idea of satisfying him. We knew that this would be an impossible task, and that no matter how this cabinet might have been constituted, my right hon. friend would have been found making much the same argument and much the same complaint that he has made to-day. He has commented upon my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Monk). There is nothing that more quickly arouses my right hon. friend to a high tide of eloquence than the sight of my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works, than to see him sitting upon the treasury benches while my right hon. friend is sitting in opposition. He compares the blessing of Mr. Chamberlain upon my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works to the pouring of holy water upon his Satanic majesty. I do not know whether my right honourable friend compares the blessing of Mr. Chamberlain to the holy water, or whether he desires to compare the Minister of Public Works to his Satanic majesty. If the latter was his intention, I can only say that my right hon. friend might have found a much more suitable illustration a little nearer home.

Then he clutched eagerly at the idea of dissension in this cabinet, and there is nothing that would fill his heart with greater joy than to believe that such dissension exists. But after all, it does seem to me that the speech of my right hon. friend and his illustrations have been prompted by something of a more personal nature. Every honourable gentleman in this House remembers, I am sure, that on one occasion, about twelve or thirteen years ago, one of his most distinguished colleagues declared that my right hon. friend and his colleagues were wont to fight like blazes. Well, I can assure him that there is no such unhappy condition in this cabinet. Then he thinks that the Minister of Public Works ought still to be sitting upon the opposition benches. Well, that may be a matter of opinion, Mr. Speaker, and my

right hon. friend is entitled to hold his opinion. But if I may venture to speak for my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works, I would hazard the statement that he prefers the company on this side of the House to that on the other side, and therefore he is over here. Then my right hon. friend points out the weaknesses of various other gentlemen on this side of the House. I think he might well remember that weaknesses are not confined to hon. gentlemen on this side of the House. I have not heard that my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works ever held up to the people of this country as the goal of his aspirations the complete severance of the ties which bind this Dominion to the rest of the empire. If, at the opening of this parliament, we are to indulge in reminiscences of that kind, it is only right perhaps that they should not be confined to one side of the House.

Now, my right hon. friend is very much concerned about the naval question, and he is deeply anxious to know what is to be the policy of the present administration with respect thereto. Now, let me point out to him one or two considerations. He imagines, if one may draw a reasonable conclusion from his utterances, that this government should have come down with a full fledged naval policy at the commencement of this session. That is, as I understand it, the gravamen of his complaint. In 1896, my right hon. friend came into power on the 11th day of July, and he met parliament on the 19th day of August in the same year. The present administration was formed on the 10th day of October 1911, and we met parliament on the 15th of November in the same year. We come before parliament sooner than did the right hon. gentleman on the former occasion. He came before parliament on that occasion without proposing a single measure, although he had before him the Ottawa platform of 1893, with no less than thirteen or fourteen articles suggesting reforms which, as he and his friends declared, were absolutely essential to the welfare of this country. Now, we have not followed his example in that respect. We have met parliament at an earlier date than he did, and we have presented a very substantial bill of fare indeed, one that will occupy the attention of this parliament for some time, even under the best conditions. Therefore I submit that the course which has been taken by this government, and the progress we have made in carrying out the policy which we placed before the people, can well be contrasted with the attitude and the position of my right hon. friend and his government when they met parliament in 1896.

Now he desires to know what we propose to do with regard to the naval policy. Well, I will tell him. In the first place, let me