

in his seventy-fifth year—or that the hon. gentleman was under the impression, when he dictated that interview, that all hope of the reconstruction of the Cabinet, as he wished, was at an end, and that he wished to place himself before the people of Canada as being particularly generous and public-spirited. I know he has a great faculty for advertising himself that way. While we naturally congratulate the First Minister upon his success in reconstructing the government, and on his having put down the mutiny in his crew, still we may be allowed to conjecture somewhat of his feelings and of the position in which he is. The hon. gentleman now sits at the head of a Cabinet, the majority of whom he knows are not his friends, and he knows that a majority of them have, through their spokesman, stated that they do not think that he is the person who should fill that position. One can imagine the hon. gentleman who fills the office of Minister of Finance smiling blandly through his spectacles at the First Minister who sits not very far from him, I presume, at the Council Board, and, while he smiles, I can imagine that hon. gentleman privately whetting the axe which was, I believe, to have been applied to the purpose of cutting off the mouldering branches of the National Policy, but which, having failed in doing that duty, has been latterly used for the purpose of cutting off the mouldering branches of the Cabinet, including the First Minister. My hon. colleague from Halifax apparently thinks it better that I should not make any further observations with respect to the hon. gentleman who recently filled the office of High Commissioner, and perhaps it is just as well.

Hon. Mr. ALMON—There is life in the old gentleman yet.

Hon. Mr. POWER—Yes, there is life in him, but I may say that in 1891 that hon. gentleman gave the public to understand, through the press or through some interviewer, that he felt that he had attained too great an age to undertake such a serious responsibility as being Premier of Canada; and now, after the lapse of nearly five years, I find the hon. gentleman, who has not been growing younger and stronger during the time, is of the opinion that he is quite capable of assuming the duties of the Premiership. That is another illustration

of the fact that the statements of public men are not to be taken literally. Now, apart from the recent crisis, there are one or two questions which, I think, one has a right to ask the hon. First Minister. I notice that in the reconstruction of the government there is no mention made of the Solicitor General, who is a somewhat important officer, and whose office is one which I think ought to be filled, particularly at the beginning of the session. I had hoped that a prominent member of the legal profession in the province of Quebec, who was recently placed in this House, would have been appointed Solicitor General, to give the government valuable and needed assistance in passing their measures through this chamber. I am sorry that the hon. First Minister has not informed the House that our expectations in that respect have been realized. There is just one other point which I should like to call the hon. Minister's attention. He may answer or not, of course, at his discretion—that is, with respect to the position of the comptrollers. In the Act which provided for the appointment of these officers, it was stated that they were to be under the direction of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, or Finance Minister, that they were to report through the Minister and not directly; and, as a matter of course, if these comptrollers are under the control or jurisdiction of another Minister—and in the discussion which took place in the House of Commons at that time, I think it was stated by Sir John Macdonald, the First Minister of the day, that these officers were to fill somewhat the same positions as the under-secretaries in England—they were not to be members of the Cabinet, and they were merely to assist in the transaction of the business of the departments to which they were attached. It was understood that that was the intention when that legislation was passed, and when those officers were appointed. It has been stated recently that the comptrollers are members of the Cabinet, and, of course, being members of the Cabinet, they can go to a meeting of the Cabinet and vote down their principal, the Minister of Trade and Commerce or the Minister of Finance. Clearly that was not the intention of Parliament when those offices were created, and I think that the House has a right to know from the First Minister whether or not these gentlemen are, or are to be