

MR. FOWLER'S CHALLENGE.

After referring to threats that had been made of an attack on him, and to the abuse and insinuations which had been thrown out from the Government side, Mr. Fowler added:

"I do not believe in this sort of thing. And, sir, who is responsible for it? The Prime Minister is the man in whose hands rests the honor of this House and who is responsible for the tone of the debates on this floor. The Prime Minister can prevent that sort of attack. If he thinks it good politics to authorize that kind of attack; let him go ahead, he is responsible, not I. But I should be a poltroon if, when I am attacked, I did not defend myself, and not only defend myself, but having the material, if I did not use that material to carry the attack into the other side. Now, as I say, let these charges, let this scandal—this alleged scandal—if you have any with respect to me, be brought forward. You cannot bring it on too soon. I have never, in my public or in my private capacity, done anything of which I am ashamed or of which I have need to be ashamed, or of which any honest, decent man should be ashamed. Let them bring on their scandal, let them produce their witnesses and their evidence. But let me tell you, if I am attacked, I shall defend myself, and not only defend myself, but also will lead an attack." (Hansard, 1907, pages 3318-19.)

MR. BOURASSA CALLS FOR INQUIRY.

Two days later Mr. Henri Bourassa, member for Labelle, a Liberal, who has lately shown a good deal of independence, called the attention of the House to Mr. Fowler's statements, and to accusations that had been made or suggested in the chamber against Conservative members. He declared that charges, insinuations and reflections had gone far enough, and that the time had come for investigation. He held that public confidence in public men was shaken by these reflections, and by the growing opinion that the two parties were conspiring to suppress damaging facts.

"It is high time," he said, "that the Government and Parliament should take the matter into their own hands and clear the atmosphere; and if there are unworthy men in this House, whether they be Conservative or Liberal, their conduct should be probed to the bottom and they should be punished."

SIR WILFRID OBJECTS TO INVESTIGATION.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not welcome this suggestion. He said that Mr. Fowler's words were probably spoken in haste and anger, and that there was nothing before the public in the way of a charge against Conservative members. The insurance report had not then come down, and the Premier thought that any discussion of insurance matters at that stage would be premature. He regretted that the press had made any reflections upon any member in connection with insurance. The Premier said, however, that before the session closed the matter which Mr. Bourassa had brought forward must come to the attention of the House.

MR. BORDEN PREPARED TO ASSIST INQUIRY.

While the Prime Minister thus evaded and postponed the question, Mr. Borden the Opposition leader, spoke out plainly and decisively. He declared that there had not been and would not be any agreement or arrange-