

1894, just 3 days before the government had been sworn into office, charging Sir Adolphe Caron with certain dereliction of duty, which if proved to be true would end his political life. That letter was not sent to His Excellency as has been stated in the newspapers, nor were any of them sent to the Governor General. They were sent to me as the head of the government. I at once placed that letter in the hands of Sir Adolphe Caron, as it was my duty to do. He produced affidavits and evidence to show that the charges which had been laid against him were untrue, and to the satisfaction of other parties whose names need not be introduced in a debate of this kind. During the summer, Sir Adolphe informed me that he had some suspicions as to the writer. He said that he had sent the letters to an expert and a detective in New York in order to ascertain whether the anonymous letter bore any of the characteristics of the letters which accompanied them. A report came back which he showed to me. I read it carefully. I confess it was rather an ingenious report, and my remark to Sir Adolphe Caron was this—"I know very little about expert testimony of this kind, but I do not conceive it possible that a Minister of the Crown would write a letter of that kind to another colleague, and I would suggest to you the propriety of disabusing your mind upon a question of that kind." He asked for the envelope but I had thrown it into the waste basket and lost it. I suppose most men in my position receive anonymous letters continually, I often receive them, finding fault with my colleagues and giving information. As a rule they go into the waste basket or into the fire. On the 9th November, 1895, I received another letter purporting to come from the same party who had sent the first one. That I handed to Sir Adolphe Caron. Comparing it with the first he said that they were written by the same hand, and again he expressed his opinion as to the writer. I dealt with the matter then as I had done before. I did not consider it of sufficient importance, on my part, to insult a colleague by asking him for an explanation or laying it before him. Indeed, I should have very little else to do if I were to continue carrying the tales which are brought to me, either anonymously or otherwise, about one colleague or another. The matter remained in the position which I have described until the day of the opening

of parliament. After the opening, a gentleman belonging to the other House followed me along the corridor to the Senate and asked me about those letters. I gave him no information whatever, but asked him what he knew about them. He then said he knew that certain letters had passed and that Sir Adolphe Caron had accused one of his colleagues of writing them. I told him that he should be careful about using such an expression, and that I doubted the truth of it, although such letters had been written. That same evening another member of Parliament came to my residence and asked me about the letters. He told me what he had heard, and I asked him how he obtained such information. The answer was that it was the common talk in the Albany Club in the city of Toronto. I then came to the conclusion that it would ultimately get into the press, and that my duty to my colleague was to inform him of the fact; and, after consulting Sir Adolphe Caron, I did so the next day. There is the whole history, so far as I am concerned of that transaction. Mr. Montague—I do not blame him for it—felt very much annoyed and chagrined and asked, "Why did you not not tell me this before?" I said "for the simple reason that I had no desire to create any animosity or ill-feeling between you and your colleague." More than that, when Sir Adolphe Caron told me that he intended to lay the matter before His Excellency the Governor General, I advised him not to do so, for the reason that I knew it would create a disturbance and in all probability lead to the removal of these two gentlemen—that it must necessarily do so—if the statements were true. I was under the impression, and am still, that we had quite enough difficulties to contend with in the country without importing into it a personal disagreement of this character. I said at the time in fact on both occasions, and I repeat now, that I could not conceive it possible that any man having the slightest regard for his own reputation, or having regard for the solemn oath which he had taken as a privy councillor, could by any possibility be guilty of writing anonymous letters, and therefore I treated it in the manner that I have indicated to this House until I heard that it had become the common talk of the city of Toronto, and then I deemed it my duty to inform my colleague of what had been said. I think I may close by stating what it is