

fairly claim the high title of gentleman. Sir, I rose merely because of my disappointment. I came here for a treat; I came here expecting that the leader of the Opposition or his first lieutenant, or probably, my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills), or, it may be my hon. friend who can roar like a lion and coo like a sucking dove, the hon. member from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Davies) would afford us that treat. But the fact is that these gentlemen were not equal to the occasion, and we need never expect them to be equal to the occasion as it rises. Above all the point of importance is that the Government has been strengthened. The appearance of Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., in the Government has frightened the wits out of gentlemen opposite. The addition of my hon. friend, Hon. Mr. Desjardins, also greatly increases the strength of the Government, for Mr. Desjardins is not only a man of ability, but, as the hon. leader of the Opposition too well knows, he represents an element in Quebec that is of great force. Well, Sir, we have a stronger Government, and I think that the events of this day prove that we have a weaker Opposition.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that it must be a matter of poignant regret to my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition and my hon. friend to my left (Sir Richard Cartwright) that they were not able to make speeches upon this occasion sufficiently interesting to please the taste of the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Davin). That hon. gentleman has told us that there is nothing that he despises more than studied impromptus and carefully-prepared witticisms. I am not surprised at that, Sir, because the hon. gentleman has given the House a greater surfeit of these things than any other man I know. I think I remember that a few years ago, the hon. gentleman undertook a pilgrimage to Stratford, having prepared a very learned and brilliant extempore lecture to be delivered from the public platform in that city—production bristling with witticisms, and not only that but with interruptions from small boys and clever retorts with which the interrupters were instantly crushed. For one reason or another the hon. gentleman did not reach his destination. Nevertheless we had the speech with the carefully-prepared impromptus which were not even delivered all fully reported in the columns of the next morning's "Citizen." There were the interruptions from the small boys and the lecturer's brilliant retorts, the applause which greeted every brilliant impromptu and the thunderous cheers which marked one of the most magnificent perorations ever heard in the Dominion of Canada. The hon. gentleman, I may remark in passing, had reached only about half-way to his destination, and all this time was slumbering peacefully at a wayside town. Of course, whether a speech pleases or not is largely

a matter of taste. But I will venture to say that of the hundreds who are sitting in this Chamber, and who heard the attack made by the hon. leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), few will leave this Chamber without feeling that that attack was as strong and as effective, and as true, as the English language could make it. If they did not please their opponents, they may be gratified to know that at least they pleased their friends and all independent men. It may be nothing to some men, it may be nothing to the hon. member for Assiniboia that dishonour and treachery and backbiting and meanness and untruth should be exposed in this House, but it matters much to the honest people of Canada. The hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) phrased the situation very neatly. I think, when he told us that these gentlemen were playing as the Royal Ottawa Low Comedy Troupe. I have known the hon. gentleman from Assiniboia too long to call him names, but I regret that he descended to playing the part of mountebank in that troupe. That is not his customary role, and I do not think that in it he came off with his customary applause. I would advise him, notwithstanding his great versatility, to drop the role he has played to-day. The hon. gentleman tells us that the practice is to take men into the Government on account of their weight, their intellectual weight, and their qualities as gentlemen. Why did the hon. gentleman not explain that, notwithstanding that he has sat here under Sir John Macdonald, Sir John Abbott, Sir John Thompson and Sir Mackenzie Bowell, not one of these gentlemen ever discovered these distinguished qualities in himself. Let me tell him that the situation is one which should not be passed by in silence, one which has, I think, been aptly designated by my hon. friend. You may search the annals of your country's history in vain to find a precedent or a situation such as we have had here. We have had seven men leaving the Government and openly proclaiming that they left it because the leader was incompetent and an imbecile. And you have the seven men coming back to the Government and ranging themselves under the banner of this incompetent and this imbecile, and asking the country to believe that we have got a strong Government which should be followed. Where, Sir, can you parallel that in the history of Canada, or in the history of any other country? The hon. gentleman who leads the House to-day told us that no reason but that of public interest prompted these gentlemen to resign, and no reason but the public interest prompted them to come back. But he was singularly forgetful of the fact that the reasons which prompted them to resign have all been embalmed in the statement read by the Finance Minister in this House as his own statement and the statement of his six