

charges of corruption and malfeasance on the part of the government. Sir, in my opinion this is rather a picayune style of argument on the part of men who have themselves held for many years responsible offices in government.

### A Question of To-day.

The question before the people of Canada, Mr. Chairman, in my judgment, is not what ought to have been done twenty-five, or twenty, or fifteen, or ten years ago ; the question is what ought to be done to-day, and the grounds on which we ought to be tried, the grounds on which we ought to be found guilty, or the grounds on which we have the right to demand your confidence, are, how we have administered the government of Canada during the period that it has been under our control, since the year 1896 down to the present moment. (Cheers.) Now, sir, I shall not waste more words on these preliminaries, but I will proceed to deal with certain statements made by our opponents, notably by Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster, who, as you know, is the chief financial exponent of the opposition. I have observed with some regret that these gentlemen seem bent on maintaining their ancient reputation. It does not much surprise me to find that Sir Charles Tupper, as of old, has almost outstripped his own well-earned reputation as a wholesale manufacturer of fiction. (Laughter.) Nor am I altogether surprised, either to find that Mr. Foster runs him an exceedingly good second in the scarcely so respectable—but still, I suppose from a political point of view, useful—function of peddler and retailer of half-truths. (Laughter.) Now, sir, in the case of Sir Charles Tupper, who, of course, is entitled to preference as the leader of the Opposition, I observe that Sir Charles brings three several assertions against us.

### Sir Charles and the Contingent.

First of all, I note that Sir Charles declares on every occasion that it was he (Sir Charles Tupper) who, by his influence on public opinion, really sent the Canadian contingent to South Africa. (Laughter.) Now, sir, I know Sir Charles' colossal self-conceit ; and I am very well aware that Sir Charles is just the man to persuade himself that the conduct of the Government was influenced by the force of his phillipics, but I beg to inform Sir Charles Tupper on this occasion, as I have informed him elsewhere, that he had as little influence on the deliberations of the Government, he had as little influence on the question whether or not we would send a contingent to South Africa, as he had in framing the policy of the British Government as to whether or not they would send a