

has seriously prejudiced the future conduct of these negotiations by allowing American fishermen to enjoy, for several months, at their own sweet will, the right to fish in our waters. Now, I suppose it would be impossible for us to ascertain, unless indeed a committee of enquiry were permitted to sit, and we had the Hon. Mr. O'Donohoe before us, what the hon. gentleman's notion of being very nearly in his Cabinet may be, but if we are to believe the newspaper reports—though I am aware that what appears in newspapers is not always correct—is sometimes subordinated to political exigencies—the Hon. Mr. O'Donohoe was at one time in possession of a despatch from no one less than the then Governor General, stating that he was then in the Cabinet. We would like more light on this question, and, possibly, before the Session closes, more light may be vouchsafed to us, if not by the hon. gentleman, at any rate by some of the parties to that very remarkable treaty or negotiation which terminated, not in bringing Mr. O'Donohoe into the Cabinet, but according to the hon. gentleman, very nearly into the Cabinet. Now, as to certain other observations made by the hon. gentleman, and in particular as to the recent changes among the members of this Cabinet, I am bound to admit that in one sense possibly it may not be a matter of very great importance to us on this side, although in another sense it has always been considered a matter of very considerable moment to the public of this country what were the antecedents and the characters of the gentlemen entrusted with important posts; but I want to say one or two words with respect to some remarks of the hon. gentleman, having reference to my hon. friend from Digby (Mr. Vail). My hon. friend the leader of the Opposition was not in the Government at that time, but I was, and I have a very keen recollection of the delicate fashion in which the hon. gentleman opposite endeavored to reconcile the supporters of my hon. friend Mr. Mackenzie to the fact that we, like themselves, had been obliged to import an hon. colleague, not from the bench, but from a distinguished position in the Government of Nova Scotia. It may interest the House to know what the leader of the Government, being then in Opposition, thought as to that transaction. He said:

"It certainly was a great compliment to the gentleman from Digby that he should be selected to enter the Administration. He (Sir John Macdonald) did think that here would have been found among the hon. members from Nova Scotia one who would be fitted to fill the office of Minister, but the hon. leader of the Government did not appear to think so. He evidently was of the impression that he had selected all the standards and left all the culls when he formed his Cabinet, and that he must go to fresh fields and pastures new for another Minister."

I hope my hon. friends on the other side, from Nova Scotia, will fully understand that the hon. gentleman thinks he has selected all the standards from Nova Scotia, and only left the culls, when he saw fit to go outside their ranks to select a representative. I have no desire in the world to reflect on the hon. Minister of Justice; but I will say this, that so far as my poor experience enables me to judge, looking at my hon. friends on the other side, if not in reference to the office of Minister of Justice, perhaps in reference to some of the other appointments, it might be fairer and juster to say that the hon. First Minister had selected the culls and left the standards. Now, with respect to the hon. Minister of Justice, I am fully prepared to admit that his position is peculiar. He has made considerable sacrifices; he may have run considerable risks in joining the present Government; but the precedent which the hon. gentleman has chosen to set is one of a very dubious character. I do not mean to say, and I never averred, that in a country like ours, where legal attainments are necessarily somewhat scarce and of high value, it may not sometimes be necessary, as I believe it was in the case of my hon. friend, Mr. Mowat, that a man should be taken from the bench and brought back to the political arena; but I say that it is

an extreme step, and one that requires justification. I say that in Mr. Mowat's case, most ample justification has been given of the excellence of the choice, and that no man from Ontario who has witnessed the gallant and successful struggle which Mr. Mowat has made so long for the rights of his Province and of other Provinces, which were involved in the rights of Ontario, can fail to see that the choice then made was most amply justified. But I say this also, there is a difference, it appears to me, between removing an hon. gentleman from the bench and placing him in a Local Parliament, where he will have nothing to do with the appointment or dismissal of judges, and where he will have very little power in any way of controlling them, and taking a gentleman, however distinguished, whatever his talents may be, from the bench and placing him, as Minister of Justice, in a place where he will have control of his former brethren, where he will, according to our usage, under certain circumstances have the power of promoting himself, if occasion serves, to the highest judicial post in the country. Still, that is not the only ground on which I think that the method in which the Minister of Justice was brought into this House is one which deserves some serious censure. It is perfectly well known to this House that the Minister was only enabled to take his seat here, as a member from Nova Scotia, by the expedient of purchasing a former supporter of my hon. friend beside me by an offer of a judgeship. I say that that act was, according to the First Minister's own judgment, according to his own recorded and emphatic declaration, one of the gravest acts of corruption which any Government ever committed. There are few members in this House to-day who recollect certain events which transpired in the old Parliament of Canada in 1863, but those who do, will recollect the mode in which the First Minister and his colleague now sitting beside him and my hon. friend from London (Mr. Carling), and the hon. the Minister of Railways (Mr. Pope), dealt with the appointment of Judge Sicotte in 1863—those hon. gentlemen will know I am justified in saying that, in the case of his opponents, no man could more violently and decidedly condemn the action which he has now taken. So strongly did the right hon. the First Minister feel on that subject, that he caused to be moved by one of his supporters a motion which he had prepared himself on that question. That motion reads as follows:—

"That this House feel it their duty at once to express their deep regret that His Excellency should have been advised to make the judicial appointment by which a vacancy has recently been created in the representation of the county—[shall I say of Antigonish? No]—of St. Hyacinthe, under circumstances calculated to prejudice, if not to destroy, the independence of this House, and to corrupt, at its source, our system of parliamentary government."

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Hear, hear.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. That was the language used by the hon. gentleman's supporter, that was the motion voted for by the First Minister and his colleagues whom I have enumerated, and although, unfortunately, we do not possess a *Hansard* with an accurate record of the eloquent speeches of the hon. gentleman and his friends on that occasion, I recollect perfectly well how the hon. gentleman and his supporters made the whole country ring with their denunciations of the gross and flagrant prostitution of the judicial bench—for those were the words they used—by which a member of the Opposition had been seduced into resigning his seat by the offer of a judgeship in Lower Canada. I defy the hon. gentleman, I defy his supporters, I defy his friends in this House or out of it, to point out in what possible way or shape the appointment of Mr. McIsaac to the judgeship of Antigonish differs from or can be more easily justified than the appointment of Judge Sicotte to a seat on the bench in Lower Canada, thereby vacating the representation of the county of St. Hyacinthe. What did