

state in the previous history of England or any of her colonies—and we naturally, particularly as we sit in the same chamber with the hon. gentleman, are glad that he has, at any rate, for the present, suppressed the mutiny and is still at the helm. Whether the voyage of the ship, or his command of it, is to be long or short, we do not know. My own individual hope is that the hon. gentleman may continue to command during the present voyage, which I hope and believe will not be long. A great many persons, both in Parliament and out of Parliament, were of the opinion that, looking at the character of the differences between the hon. First Minister and the majority of his colleagues who went out a few days ago from the Ministry, that regarding the language used by the gentlemen who went out and the language of the First Minister and those who remained in with respect to one another, it was impossible that there should be a reconciliation such as, apparently, has taken place. I must say that, as far as I am individually concerned, I am neither surprised nor disappointed. I have been observing the leaders of the Conservative party for a considerable number of years, in the cool shades of opposition, which are so conducive to calm and quiet observation and thought, and I have come to the conclusion that there is no curve too sharp for a Conservative Minister to take for the purpose of remaining in office, or for a Conservative who wishes to get into office to take for the purpose of getting in. I rejoice that on the present occasion, at any rate, the curves have been chiefly upon the part of the dissident Ministers. I wish to call attention to the exact words used in another place by the hon. gentleman who is supposed to have been the leader of the dissidents—at all events, who was referred to by the First Minister as being the leader. The hon. gentleman from the Kennebec division has insisted that the leader of the opposition was in fact guilty of a breach of parliamentary etiquette in manifesting any hesitation in accepting the statement of the First Minister as telling the whole truth. I turn to the speech delivered by the Hon. George E. Foster in the House of Commons on the 7th of January, and I find this statement, after mentioning a number of circumstances :

Under these circumstances we thought it our duty to retire, and in this manner to pave the way,

if possible, for the formation of a government whose Premier could command the confidence of all his colleagues, could satisfy the Liberal-Conservative party that its strongest elements were at its head and impress the country that it had a government which was united and had power to govern.

Those remarks do not seem to indicate that the vacancy in Quebec was the real difficulty, or that it had very much to do with the retirement of the hon. gentleman and his friends from the Ministry. It is not necessary to quote any more, because the hon. gentleman from the Kennebec division must know that, except in a Pickwickian sense, the vacancy in the Cabinet from Quebec was not the real cause of the difficulty. After that expression from the hon. gentleman who formerly led, and I presume still leads the House of Commons, it is rather gratifying to us in this chamber, and particularly to the hon. First Minister, to find that that gentleman has consented to come in and to serve under the First Minister whose incompetency, as they alleged, had obliged him and his colleagues to retire. Some reference has been made by the hon. leader of the opposition to an interview with Sir Charles Tupper, published in a newspaper. The First Minister said that he was not responsible for the statements in the press, and that one could not attach much confidence to them. But this was not a statement made by a reporter. This statement appeared in the Government organ in Toronto, the *Mail and Empire*, and it was given in inverted commas, and was evidently an interview carefully dictated by Sir Charles Tupper, expressing his own opinions and his views after an interview with the First Minister. Under these circumstances, it is perfectly natural and proper that Parliament should be informed as to whether the statements made by that hon. gentleman were correct or not. I go this far : I agree with the First Minister that it is an extraordinary thing that a gentleman who has had the long parliamentary and official experience which Sir Charles Tupper has had, should make a statement of that kind for publication in a newspaper. If there is anything that ought to be confidential among public men, it is just such an interview as took place between the First Minister and Sir Charles Tupper, and the publication of that interview by the latter gentleman goes to show, either that old age is impairing his faculties—he is now, I believe,