

decision. Now, I make these few remarks simply to draw back the attention of the House and country as well to what is really involved in the differences that have taken place, and which are simply and concisely set forth in both statements, and which consequently we may take to be true and to be the real reasons. We need not, therefore, go about looking for others that are not stated. These statements show that these differences were, in the opinion of the seven Ministers, as stated by the Premier in his statement read to-day, on the ground of the completion of the Government in accordance with constitutional practice and the strengthening of the Government, that on those points they were of sufficient weight to give us a basis for our action; that we thought so and took the action we did honourably and as men, and we stood by that action until the trouble was removed and the Government presented, as it does to-day, a united body, with its departments complete and most materially strengthened as well. I do not wish to sit down, even after making these few remarks—and I expected to make but a few—without stating this, that the attitude of the Liberal-Conservative party in this trying period of six or eight days has been an attitude which must strike the country, and strike it forcibly. Without panic, without passion, steady and true, the members of the Liberal-Conservative party, as represented here at Ottawa, stood firmly upon the principles of their party, with that solidity behind it which assured everybody, as leaders or otherwise, that come what would, a strong, steady, hopeful combination would emerge from it all, with differences healed, with dissension set aside, ever loyal and firm to their lifelong principles and determined to conduct them to a successful issue in the elections which are shortly to come. My hon. friend who spoke so slightly of Sir Charles Tupper, who has entered this Cabinet, might deem himself fortunate indeed if he had a record of such patriotism and ability.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, and of such sterling service to his country. My hon. friend before now has shown that he can be very brave in denunciation when his opponent is not before him. He seems to have feared that the public would forget his idiosyncrasy in that respect, and he wished to give another proof and exemplification of that trait in his character. Let me inform the hon. gentleman that Sir Charles Tupper will be in his seat before many days are over. My hon. friend can get ready all his vigorous Anglo-Saxon, and he will find, as he has always found, in Sir Charles Tupper a foeman worthy of his steel, one who before his denunciation will neither cower nor blench.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Mr. Speaker, I am sure that, notwithstanding all that the

Mr. FOSTER.

hon. Minister of Finance has said in defence of the reorganization of the Government, neither the House nor the country will be deceived with reference to the reasons assigned by the hon. member a few days ago for the retirement of himself and a number of his colleagues from the Administration and the reasons assigned to-day for their going back. In his speech to-day the hon. gentleman has endeavoured to impress the House with the view that the sole ground for difference of opinion in the Government was that he and the others who withdrew from the Government desired to see certain vacancies filled, and that the Prime Minister had failed to comply with their wishes. If we look at the changes that have taken place in the Government we can only come to the conclusion that these hon. gentlemen, when they told us that they desired that the Government should be strengthened, were very easily satisfied; for, excepting the retirement of the hon. ex-Minister of Justice, the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper), there has been, so far as this House is concerned, no practical change in the Administration. I am quite sure that when the hon. Minister told the House the other day that the retiring members desired to see the Government strengthened, and they wished to see the strongest men of the Conservative party introduced into it, he did not wish to have it inferred that the Minister of Justice was the one incapable man in the Administration, and that they retired along with him for the purpose of getting rid of him. That was not the impression made upon my mind, and I am quite sure that was not the impression made upon the mind of any hon. gentleman on either side of the House. When we look at the statement, the carefully prepared statement, made by the hon. gentleman on behalf of himself and those associated with him, we cannot but see that, if the whole is taken into consideration, there is much in it that is omitted from the paper read by the hon. Postmaster-General to-day. The hon. Minister of Finance told us on that occasion that he and his colleagues who had withdrawn from the Government of Sir Mackenzie Bowell entered it with a great deal of misgiving.

We have nevertheless unitedly and loyally striven to the best of our ability to make it strong and efficient, and it has been with growing regret that we have seen our efforts result in a measure of success less than that for which we had hoped and striven.

Does the hon. gentleman stand by that statement still? Does he say that they entered the Government with misgiving, that they consider the present Prime Minister an incapable man, that they suspected his incapacity at the time they consented to serve under him, and that after twelve months' experience they discovered his incapacity to be even greater than they had