

Now, while such is our position, I understand it is

#### THE DUTY OF THE LEADER

to be, as far as possible, the leader of the whole party, and not of any section. It is a part of his duty to collect the common sense, and to ascertain what I may call the average condition of party opinion upon the public questions of the day; so far as consists with individual freedom of thought to guide, while he is himself acted on by that opinion; to take care that that average opinion so settled is effectually represented, and pressed forward in Parliament, upon the platform and by the press; and to secure as far as he can, that the party which he has the honour of conducting, retains and increases its efficiency as a powerful instrument for promoting good Government and reform in the country which he serves. Therefore his duty is entirely different from that of the independent member, who has the privilege, which I confess to you, as a leader, I have envied him more than once, of indulging in speculative discussions in reference to topics as to which the leader's duty may yet require, in the condition of party and public opinion a judicious reticence at the moment, in order to his utterance being made at the time and under the circumstances when it may be most effective. IT HAS BEEN WELL SAID THAT NO LEADER COULD SUCCEED WHO SHOULD BE CALLED ON AT ALL TIMES TO FORMULATE OPINIONS ON ALL POSSIBLE QUESTIONS. For him as for others there is a time to speak and a time to be silent. It is no secret that I had rather be freer than I am, but being as I am I accept the recognized and inevitable limitations of my position, and act as best I can within them. I believe this is the principle on which alone the party business can be conducted. (Applause.) At the same time I hold myself free sometimes to speak and act in my individual capacity; though this is a freedom to be exercised with reserve. Now I wish to call the attention of Liberals, especially Young Liberals, to the fact that there are before us many practical pressing questions—among them, and chief among them, this, whether upon the whole array of the pledges and professions, practices and performances of the men in power as compared with each other, and with those of the Liberal party, it is not a prime duty of ours to set these contrasted statements before the people, and so to ensure that diminution and loss of the public confidence on the part of our opponents which must result from such a process. Our business is to change the Government of this country, as the only effective method of procuring a change in the methods of Government and reform in the principles of Government. I have pointed out some questions with which we have to deal; one of the most important is the great question of the preservation of the