

sire to exercise in my humble capacity. The same paper also stated that I was displeased because I had not been invited to form part of the Intercolonial conference committee. Let me say to those who inspired that article that I did not expect that two French Canadians could form part of that Intercolonial conference committee. The right hon. Prime Minister was representing not only the government but also the French element which was quite sufficient for me. I may add for the information of those who inspired that article that the right hon. gentleman was good enough to invite me to visit Paris while he was on the other side to help him in the negotiation with the French government. I told him, that, having been absent one summer on account of illness and another summer because I was at the Paris exhibition, I should be relieved from that duty. I make that statement for the right hon. gentleman's sake as well as for my own. Perhaps I may answer this article as it is my right and duty to do so by saying that a short time before we parted after the session was over, the right hon. gentleman with the consent and cheerful co-operation of all my colleagues offered to recommend me for very high compliments which I thought that my state of fortune would not permit me to accept. If I had not the confidence of my colleagues surely I would not be treated as I was being treated then. I make this statement to-day because I think I have the right to my reputation. I have left the government because I thought, that my views, being so different on a broad question from those of my colleagues, it was my duty to part from them. Surely there is no crime in a minister of the Crown giving up an important, a responsible and an honourable position to go back into private life. Let the 'News' build up the right hon. gentleman. Let it write it over again that he has more energy than all the government combined. I have no objection. My right hon. friend has received from my hands—not only when I was his colleague, but when I was his opponent in the press gallery—fair treatment and even cordial and friendly treatment. I have no objection that the right hon. gentleman should be held up as an able man of business, provided it is not to the detriment of the reputation of public men who have equal rights to stand in public opinion for what they are worth. Now Sir, only one word more. The article goes on to speak of what has been accomplished in the past by the right hon. gentleman in the province of Quebec. I do not claim any share in what has been done. I happen to know though that in the difficulties of the school question and in other difficulties, I tried to help him to the best of my ability. My humble support may not have helped him very materially although it was given at the time when the right hon. gentleman

was not of the same mind as those who say to-day that I never was worth much in the past, and that I am even worth less now.

However, let bygones be bygones as far as that part of political history is concerned. What I wanted to make clear to-day is that so long as I was a member of the government I enjoyed the confidence of my leader and of most of my colleagues. I have differed with others on questions on which public opinion is not yet enlightened, as history, and history within a short time may demonstrate. Ministers cannot always agree. It is a well known fact that on several occasions I had to disagree on certain railway proposals, going so far in the Railway Committee and in the House as to speak against certain railway proposals which some of my colleagues were upholding. There were other questions with regard to which I am not free to speak, but on which I could not agree with my former colleagues. But the main point on which we have disagreed is the fiscal policy. On that we could not possibly agree, and it was on that I went out of the cabinet. Now Sir, having made this statement so as to let the country know what my personal position was when I had the honour of being a member of the government, I beg to resume my seat.

THE PRIME MINISTER. Mr. Speaker. My hon. friend from St. Mary's (Hon. Mr. Tarte) has just made a speech, the relevancy of which to this debate I altogether fail to see. The hon. gentleman referred to an article which I have not yet read, and to which my attention was called only a few minutes ago, just before I entered the chamber. The hon. gentleman stated that he had reason to believe that this article had been inspired from the treasury benches, and judging by the manner in which he looked towards me and the manner in which he spoke afterwards, I gather that the hon. gentleman has the impression that I inspired that article. Let me say to my hon. friend; my old friend, that he ought to know me better, than to suppose that I fight with that kind of weapon. I state upon my honour—and the hon. gentleman may believe me or not, and apparently he is not inclined to believe me—but I state on my honour here; and I think the word honour is a word which friend and foe can appreciate in this House. I state on my honour that I had nothing whatever to do with that article; that I never inspired, never read or never saw it until this moment.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. Would my right hon. friend the Prime Minister permit me to say at once that he is quite mistaken. I did not make any allusion to him at all.

THE PRIME MINISTER. I am very glad to hear it, but if the hon. gentleman acquits me of this kind of warfare he apparently