

further than to cite one or two which ought to be accepted by even those gentlemen who have left the Government, for this among other reasons—it is the only political reason in the whole explanation that they give why they should leave the Administration of which they have been a part. The record shows that Sir Charles Tupper resigned the office of Minister of Railways and Canals on the 24th day of May, 1884. Parliament met the following January. The Hon. John Henry Pope was not appointed to succeed Sir Charles Tupper until the 28th September, 1885, so that through one long session of six months some of these very gentlemen sat in the House, while one of the portfolios was vacant—that, too, one of the most important in the Cabinet. There is nothing to indicate that one of them ever raised his voice in protest. Then, again, the Hon. Mr. Colby—and both gentlemen I may say have been colleagues of mine—resigned the presidency of the Privy Council on the 28th of April, 1891. Parliament met the next day, and it remained vacant until it was assumed by Mr. Abbott in June, 1891, as Prime Minister; showing that in one of these cases under the leadership of my predecessors, these same gentlemen remained, most of them in the Cabinet, with a vacancy in the government, and yet they did not find it incumbent upon them under those circumstances to send either to Sir John Macdonald or to Sir John Abbott their resignations. Let me say this, and I hope it will not be considered a reflection on some of my party, but I mean precisely what I say: The crisis to a certain extent has been brought about because, having a great question before the country, the prominent men who were most interested in having it settled did not come forward and render that assistance which under the peculiar circumstances they should have done, no matter what personal sacrifice it might have involved. It was not a fight in Ontario for any particular principle that they held dear, but it was a fight for the maintenance in its entirety of the constitution of the country. It was a fight in order to fix firmly upon the minds of the people that under no circumstances could any province be permitted to infringe on the rights and privileges of any portion of its people, no matter what their individual opinion might be upon the questions which have divided them. I look forward with very grave apprehensions to the time when any

one province shall be permitted by the federal power to interfere with and deprive any portion of its people of rights guaranteed to them by the constitution direct or implied. I have great faith in the liberality and patriotism of our French Canadian fellow citizens of the province of Quebec, still I say what is the fate of the minority in Manitoba today, may be the fate of another minority and another creed in another province to-morrow; and that may be brought about by the very fact that a majority is permitted to interfere with and deprive a minority of its rights. If we desire to make this a great and united country, if we desire to see one homogeneous people living together in peace and harmony, we must learn to respect the privileges and the sacred rights, either implied or directly guaranteed by the constitution. These are the views which I hold on this question. I yield not my own individual views upon political or religious questions to any man. It is our pleasure to be able to say that the Crown recognizes the rights of every one of its subjects throughout the empire, and if those rights are infringed in any part of the world, it is the duty, and not only the duty, but it has been the policy of the crown, to exert the power of the empire, if necessary, to protect them. I hope the time will never come when the rights of any British subject can be interfered with in any part of the world with impunity. No doubt there is much more that I could say on that subject, but I do not propose to do so at the present moment. There is, however, one question connected with the affairs of the government to which I think I may fairly refer in order to place myself right before the country. A debate took place in the other chamber yesterday in reference to an unfortunate disagreement arising from anonymous letters which were received by me charging one of my colleagues with misconduct. It has been so put by some people as to lead to the conclusion that I had something to do with this nefarious transaction. The facts are simply these, and after stating them I shall leave it to the House and the country to judge how far I was justified in the course that I pursued. We were sworn into office, after the death of the Right Hon. Sir John Thompson, on the 21st day of December, 1894, in the city of Montreal. I received an anonymous letter from Montreal, dated 18th December,