

chance. I say that every member of the Conservative party who hears me is ready to acknowledge that the circumstances were peculiar, and gave any competent leader of men in this House an immense chance. And what has been made of it? My hon. friend who leads the House has not risen equal to the occasion.

Some hon. MEMBERS. You are right.

Mr. DAVIN. I should have said my hon. friend who leads the Opposition. If there is any comfort in the slip, the hon. gentlemen may have it. I say the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition has not risen to the occasion to-day. There is no man in this House who likes the hon. leader of the Opposition better than I do. He is a scholar, and a gentleman and a man of great charm of manner; but, Sir, he is not a leader of men—he is an academic personage. He is altogether too nice for the high position he occupies; and I say that to-day he has not availed himself of the opportunity which the circumstances gave him. And as for the hon. gentleman who would be our Finance Minister, if we were to change sides, what has he done? Why, he has been simply telling us a story that belonged to the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. McMullen). A statesman of the standing of the ex-Finance Minister—what constituency does the hon. gentleman represent? He has been from constituency to constituency, and I do not recollect which one he represents now.

An hon. MEMBER. South Oxford.

Mr. DAVIN. From a gentleman occupying the position in this House which the hon. member for South Oxford does, we naturally expect something. But on this occasion he has simply been a political rag-picker in the McMullen heap. To-day, Sir, we not only get instruction in the newspapers from the pen but also from the pencil, and in the "World" newspaper there are appearing some very clever pictures of political thought by a man of real genius, Mr. Hunter. I hope that that gentleman will send down to posterity forever a picture of the hon. gentleman who had just taken his seat as the political rag-picker in the McMullen heap. Let me say this. These gentlemen have given us nothing but comedy, and low comedy degenerating into farce that ceases to be laughable and becomes painful. Let me say one word seriously of the situation. Sir, I consider that the situation was one that gave great anxiety to the country and great anxiety to the Conservative party. And one of the greatest anxieties to patriotic men was this, that it did afford a chance—a desperate chance—to the gentlemen on the Opposition side of getting into power. I say that the fear that was in the hearts of patriotic men was not that power and patronage might pass from us, but that

Mr. DAVIN.

at such a crisis as this in the history of the Empire and in the history of Canada, men such as we see before us should obtain portfolios. That was our fear. Now, Sir, the two hon. gentlemen who spoke have made no points against the Government as reconstituted. As a matter of fact the Government has been reconstituted. According to the statement of the Finance Minister these gentlemen went out because they wanted a stronger Government; and, although I am not here to undervalue any, though no man can value more highly than I do the administrative ability, the great talents of my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Justice, at the same time I am sure that he will agree with me, as the country agrees with me at this moment, that there cannot be the least doubt that the Government has been strengthened. The presence of Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., in that Government strengthens it. The announcement made by the Finance Minister is an important one. He said that the Conservative party ought to have the strongest possible Government. He said that was the aim we should have in view, and, in the course of two weeks they have given us a Government much stronger than the one that preceded it. And, Sir, the principle then enunciated is a principle that the people of Canada and the members of this House will hold the Government to; and on succeeding occasions, when that Government shall be reconstructed again or added to again, I hope that this principle will be followed, and that not merely will local considerations, geographical considerations, ethnological and theological considerations have weight, as is too often the case whatever party may be in power in Canada with our unfortunate mosaic politics—but that the question of ability to fill a ministerial position will also be taken into account. Whatever party may be in power here, the sooner we adopt and carry out the methods of the English constitution as carried out in England the better. We have a replica of the British constitution in this Canada of ours, but we have not its methods. The method in England is to take men into the Government because of their weight in Parliament; and the consequence is that, at each successive change, at each successive reconstruction of the Government in England, you have men in the Government capable of dealing with the vast and complex questions of an entire Empire. But here we see pressure brought to bear because a man is of this colour or that, of this stripe or that, irrespective of the important question, not whether he is fit to manage a department, for that is not enough, but fit to be one of the leaders of Canada, one of the pillars of the state. We should aim higher than we do, we should have not merely men fit to manage a department, but men of adequate knowledge, men of the highest ability we can find, and we should have those who can