

state to the House, and which have to some extent been stated by the right hon. the Prime Minister. I trust, Sir, that those reasons, while they may not appeal to the judgment of every one, will at least enable my friends in whose good opinion I desire to stand well, my constituents whom I represent in this House, and my province which I have represented in this government; I trust that when I state my reasons I will be able to satisfy them that whether I have erred or otherwise, I have at all events sought in this my action to do what I believed to be my duty.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, speculation is very rife as to the causes which have impelled me to this action. I see it very widely stated in the public press that the fact that some of the members on this side of the House pressed and successfully carried amendments to the railway commission Bill was regarded by me as an offence and was one of the predisposing causes creating dissatisfaction and discontent, and leading me to seriously consider the question of my resignation. I do not know by what standard these people would measure me; I do not know in what balance they would have me weighed, but I trust there is nobody who entertains such a contemptible opinion of me as to suppose that the action of these members in that regard would cause me any offence. When that Bill came before the House I thought it was treated fairly. I had no reason to complain, and until I saw the statement made with such confidence in the newspaper press of this country, I was not aware that I had entertained such a feeling or had been offended by the action of any one of the members of this House. Why, Sir, some of the clauses that were treated in that way in this House and upon which my view did not carry; some of these clauses were of a purely every day character, and while I was bound to have an opinion and while having that opinion I did not fail to express it, yet I am bound to acknowledge and I am free to say that there was no member in the House who would not be as well entitled to express a sound judgment on these clauses as I myself was. I endeavoured while that Bill was going through the House in some two or three instances, to have hon. members know and feel that so far as I could control the consideration of the question I regarded it as an open one, and I stated that if hon. members felt that I was wrong they might freely say so by their amendments and by their speeches. I therefore trust that none of my hon. friends who took that course will do me the injustice to believe that their action had the slightest impression on my mind. Another cause that has been assigned for my present action is that I had no assistance from my colleagues in the council in pushing that Bill through the committee. I dismiss that with a similar observation. I did not ask any of my

colleagues of the ministry to help me because I felt that not having studied the Bill as I had done they could not be so familiar with its contents and so well informed upon it as I was to meet the objections that were being made in the House. Had I asked any of them to do so, I want to say openly and publicly that there is no reason in the world so far as I know why they would not have cheerfully and readily come to my help.

Another statement which if possible has had a much wider circulation and which seems to have met with some acceptance in quarters that I would not have thought were likely to accept it; is the statement that I have long been considering the intention of resigning owing to rebuffs and continued ill-treatment received at the hands of my colleagues. Now, Sir, I want to say emphatically here that until the question of the Grand Trunk Pacific came up for consideration before council, the thought of resignation never entered into my mind. And if I had not seen the statement in the papers I would not have been informed as to the conditions which it is said prevailed in council, and as to the treatment I was receiving from my colleagues. Let me say that I know of no instance—and should my separation now prove to be a permanent separation—I am bound to say that I can acquit my late colleagues of any charge of that kind so far as I myself have any personal knowledge. I have heard the name of Mr. Sifton, the Minister of the Interior mentioned as having been caballing against me, and endeavouring to undermine me and my influence in the Cabinet. Well, if that be the case he has succeeded most admirably in concealing that from my knowledge at all events. I never had it in my mind that that gentleman's conduct towards me was such as has been represented. I do not know, nor do I suspect any member of the council from which I have just retired, of having treated me in any such manner. But if there was any evidence required as to the opinions which I held and as to my feeling towards the Minister of the Interior, I think I may at this moment appeal to the fact that when during his absence he was assailed in a manner which I thought was unfair, my voice was the first voice raised in his defence, feeble though my voice may have been. Now, Mr. Speaker, the sole and only cause which has led me to take this regrettable step; and I own it frankly to the House that it is regrettable to me as I know that it must be regrettable to my friends not only here but in my own province—the only cause which has led me to take that regrettable step is because I have been unable to justify to my mind, to my own conscience, and to my own duty to my people, the support of the proposal which the government have decided upon making to this House and the