

of this country, either in my own Province, where my conduct as a Minister and as a man has been endorsed as few public men in this House ever had their conduct endorsed, or elsewhere, I am ready to meet him; and I challenge him, whenever he is ready for the issue, to meet me in fair and open discussion, and he will find me prepared for the combat.

Mr. HUNTINGTON. I think it will occur to the House, Sir, that the hon. gentleman who has just spoken has travelled a little out of the record. He seemed at first to suppose that something unusual had been done in calling attention to the utterances of the distinguished gentleman who has lately been imported into this House as a Minister. Now, Sir, I do not think it is strange, but natural, that we should ask, when we heard that Mr. McLelan had been nominated President of the Council, who he was. I do not think that it is strange that hon. gentlemen with enquiring minds should say first of all, where does he come from? And they found he came from Nova Scotia. They remember that not many years ago he came to this House full of that bitterness which the hon. Minister had boasted that he had since extracted from him. They remember that the hon. gentleman, when he came here, protested, in the name of Nova Scotia, which sent him as one of its representatives, against the cause which the hon. Minister of Railways had pursued and to the view that in bartering and selling the rights of Nova Scotia he was promoting its interests; and it was natural that the hon. member for Centre Huron (Sir Richard J. Cartwright) should enquire, is this Minister the same Mr. McLelan? Then a little later on they saw him change his views. Why, they did not know; you cannot see motives, you cannot impute motives; but they saw him cross the floor not exactly cross the floor of this House, but assume a position which made it possible at the same time that he handed over his convictions to the Minister of Railways to accept an office from the Minister of Railways. Naturally my hon. friend, the member for Centre Huron, asks, is this the same Mr. McLelan who was appointed Commissioner of the Intercolonial Railway in such striking connection with his change of views on the great Nova Scotia question? It is a matter of history. Everybody would like to know who is this new Minister, and what he has done. Well, I do not think it is very strange that enquiry should be made respecting that hon. gentleman who distinguished himself in public life in Nova Scotia by bringing charges against the Minister of Railways, in connection with whom he came into the House, gross and base charges, which the Minister himself will admit, if true, to be widely calculated to destroy public confidence in him. The Minister of Railways boastfully told the House that he is a great man and occupies a high position; he taunted the Opposition on their minority in the House, he spoke indeed of everything except this particular matter. My hon. friends did not attack the hon. Minister of Railways, if the hon. Minister of Railways was an innocent man, they attack the circumstance that his colleague to-day had never purged himself from the accusation which, if an honorable man, and he still believed that accusation true, would have made it impossible for him to join the Administration. Sir, I think we must come back to the original position, notwithstanding the rhetoric and vehemence of the hon. gentleman. We do not want explanations respecting the "speak now" business. The duty of the Opposition is to enquire whether the new Minister is this Mr. McLelan, and whether he retains the same views, or whether he has changed his views. Before he asks the confidence of the House and uses his influence and eloquence, as he doubtless will do, to impress on hon. members his views, they had a right to ask whether he had changed his views as stated by himself, that the present Minister of Railways was a public plunderer and a disgrace to the Province he represented. If the President of the

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

Council has eaten humble pie and handed in his submission to that hon. gentleman, as the hon. gentleman has boasted here and often, and if he has given up the views which he at one time entertained, we have the right to ask what were the circumstances which led to the change. Hon. gentlemen opposite have said that we were not in favor of reform, and it will be a great calamity if we find we have lost their confidence; but is it not enough that we are not up to the standard. What we want to know is this: is the hon. Minister of Railways the man the hon. President of the Council painted him, did he enter into a corrupt bargain, did he commit a great crime; and if not, he commits a great crime in not withdrawing those accusations, since he has found the virtue of the Minister of Railways whom he at one time denounced as a man utterly unworthy of confidence and trust.

Mr. McLELAN. I am somewhat surprised, Mr. Speaker, at the attention which hon. gentlemen opposite have bestowed on me this afternoon, as I did not expect so much of their attention, especially upon those old matters which occurred so many years ago in Nova Scotia. During the past summer I had the honor of appearing before the electors of Colchester and of meeting opposition there. I expected that in the heat of the contest everything connected with Nova Scotia and Nova Scotian politics might possibly be introduced; they were introduced, and this very question, this very speech which the hon. member for Centre Huron (Sir Richard J. Cartwright) has quoted here to-day was brought before the electors who understood the whole position of the case, and they passed upon that question and upon all other questions which were then raised, and sent me here as their representative in this House by an overwhelming majority. The hon. leader of the Opposition has told the House that I am a lucky politician. I regret that I cannot return the compliment, for if ever there was an unlucky politician it is surely the hon. gentleman who leads the present Opposition. It is true that he is at the head of a party which is growing small by degrees and beautifully less, if I do not mistake public feeling; but the foundations of every position which he has taken as leader of that party have been swept away, and he has shown himself to be an unlucky leader and politician right through. But, Mr. Speaker, he says I am lucky, because, after twenty-five years of public life in this country, I have been a few months a member of the Cabinet. Let me say this: that after spending a quarter of a century in public life, I entered the Cabinet, not by intrigue on my own part, not by intrigue on the part of any of my personal friends, but I entered it honorably. I was invited to enter it, and the people of my county sustained me. Mr. Speaker, if report be true, there are men occupying the positions of leaders of parties, who did not reach those positions without the intrigue of their friends. The hon. member for Centre Huron has read portions of that speech, and has put to me certain questions. As the hon. Minister of Railways has stated, party lines in Nova Scotia previous to Confederation were drawn very clearly. Party contests were very severe, and public men in that contest did use very extreme language in their references to each other. The question of the Pictou Railway came upon us suddenly in 1866, and it was surrounded by circumstances that excited the fiercest opposition, and aroused all the old party feeling that was so intense in that Province. Reference has been made to the language used by the present Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, but he has declared over his own signature that he did not impute any personal motives of wrong on the part of the hon. Minister of Railways. Whatever I may have said on that occasion I say now, namely, that when that contract was complete, and when the whole history of the railway was made known to the people of Nova Scotia, no