

relation to me to some extent—and to the policy of the government of which I have been for some little time the head, as will be satisfactory to the Senate. I now move that when this House adjourns to-night it stand adjourned until to-morrow evening at eight o'clock.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I do not rise to oppose the motion of the hon. leader of the House, but to express my regret and the regret of the House, and I think also of the people of Canada, that the Premier has not availed himself of the earliest opportunity to give an explanation of the extraordinary circumstances which have transpired within the last three days. It was a matter of very great surprise not alone to you, hon. gentlemen, but also to the people of Canada, when on Monday morning it was announced that seven members of the Cabinet had resigned. So unprecedented a step was new, not only in the history of Canada, but to most countries under constitutional government. It was but one year ago, when the great Conservative party of this country felt that there was but one man who could properly be selected to fill the place rendered vacant by the death of the late Sir John Thompson. The press of this country, and the public sentiment of the party to which the hon. gentleman belongs, singled him out as the very best man to unite the party at that time. We should hear, and I think the country has a right to know, the causes that have led to this extraordinary divergence of opinion in the short period of one year. I understand an explanation has been made in another place by a gentleman who was the Minister of Finance, and if he has been correctly reported in the newspaper that was published this evening, our surprise is all the more increased. He is reported to have said :

There is no disagreement between ourselves and the Premier upon any question of public policy, trade or constitutional question with regard to which action has already been taken, or in respect of which an attitude has been assumed by the government under the present Premier.

That statement seems very extraordinary. It makes an explanation all the more necessary at the earliest possible period that it can be given. What is the deduction? What is the insinuation thrown out? That the Premier of this country is not mentally capable of leading the party which he was

selected to lead a year ago. I scarcely think that the opinion of the people of Canada will confirm the statement made by the ex-Minister of Finance. Certainly the universal verdict will be that the time selected for the resignation was in all respects a most extraordinary one and a very unfair and improper one. No later than last July the government announced, in a written statement solemnly arrived at, a particular line of policy to be pursued in reference to this unhappy question which has disturbed the people of this country for the last three years. There was no hint then of a want of unanimity in the personnel of the administration; but need I go back five or six months? Why, only last week, in this chamber, His Excellency's advisers placed a paper in his hands in which they laid down their policy in reference to this important question; and yet before this speech is answered, before the ink is dry, we find that seven gentlemen leave the cabinet, giving the public no explanation other than the meagre one that was given in another place to-day. I say it is most extraordinary and is entirely without precedent. English history affords but one instance of its having occurred, and that was in the reign of Charles the Second; but my recollection is that in Canada no event of a similar character has occurred, except in reference to the manner in which the late Sir Allan McNab was driven from the premiership. But in that case the circumstances were different, and there was no striking below the belt. Sir Allan McNab had been in feeble health and not like the Premier, who has shown extraordinary vigour in the last few months. He was not able to remain in the chamber for any length of time, and the public press of Upper and Lower Canada demanded that a change should be made. A question came up in the House, not a very important one, in which the government were defeated on what was known as the double majority; that is, they were unable to command a majority of members from Upper Canada and Lower Canada, and that was made a pretext for the change, and Sir Allan McNab reluctantly was obliged to retire, in consequence of four of his ministers resigning. That is the only instance in Canadian history of a similar event occurring, and I think it is a matter of very great regret that such an incident has come