

have always had the greatest possible admiration for the Prime Minister and I sincerely regret his enforced absence from the House. The same regard, I have not the slightest doubt, is held for him by every hon. member on this side of the House; and I think that nothing could be more unjust to the leader of the Opposition than to imply for a moment that he was finding fault with the Prime Minister because of his absence in the exigencies of the occasion. What the leader of the opposition suggested was that the leader of the Government should, if possible, be in the House, he being the man who is responsible to the people and on whose shoulders the people have placed the burden of conducting the Government. Under the present circumstances it seems that this is not possible. But there are various rumours in regard to the Prime Minister's desire to be relieved of his office. We have no other means of obtaining information in this country—on our side, at all events—than through the medium of the newspapers and reports which go abroad in the press of the party to which the right honourable gentleman belongs; and when those reports, purporting to come with authority from headquarters, stand uncontradicted, we have the right to believe the statements they contain. From these reports we learn that the Prime Minister was willing and, indeed, anxious to throw off the responsibility of leading the government, by reason of the state of his health, and that pressure was brought to bear upon him to renounce this privilege. He was cruelly prevailed upon by his friends to remain in his position regardless of the effect his enforced stay in office might have upon his health, and this, in order to prolong for a few years the life of a decayed, a decrepit, and a marked-for-death administration. These are the observations which the leader of the Opposition expressed, and I cannot entertain the idea that the right hon. gentleman who leads the Government would purposely put a false construction upon this his words. He may possibly have misunderstood what was said, but I want to make it perfectly clear to him and to the country at large that the Prime Minister has the deepest possible sympathy of his friends on this side, and that whatever time may be necessary for him to spend away from the House in the interests of his health, no matter what inconvenience it may involve, we shall concede him ungrudgingly; for it is our common desire on this side to see the Prime Minister re-

[Mr. McKenzie.]

stored to his former vigour. I hope that this will satisfy every one within the sound of my voice that the leader of the Opposition had nothing in mind but the opinion to which I have just given expression.

We trust that we shall hear from the hon. gentlemen who have gone as plenipotentiaries from the Government to meet the Prime Minister in that most holy city of New York, where, it seems, every great thing appertaining to this country of ours must now transpire. Halifax is the capital of Nova Scotia and has for a long time been regarded as a highly loyal city. The Prime Minister was there. Why did not the representatives of the Government choose that city as the place in which to interview the Prime Minister? No. They had to ignore Halifax and bestow on the city of New York the honour which belonged to the capital of Nova Scotia. However, we hope that they have good news to bring us, and that the Prime Minister will come back and some day before long resume his position at the head of the Government.

Now, there are several points in the speech of the leader of the Government to which I might refer, but I do not think that it is necessary that I should deal with them at all. There is one point, however, upon which I must touch. The leader of the Opposition charged the Government and its supporters with not having been elected to the House on a proper franchise, on the ground that the War-time Election Act was not the proper, democratic and free kind of franchise that we should have in this country, it having deprived a great many citizens of the right of passing judgment upon the Government. We are told that if Parliament being allowed to exist for another year through extending its constitutional limit it could do just as it pleased. I join issue sharply with the leader of the Government on that point, and say that when the end of the five years came for which we were elected, those who were in a position to elect members to this House should not, by reason of an extension of the life of Parliament for another year, have been deprived of that right. If one year was added to the life of Parliament for war purposes that did not authorize the Government to change the jury that would pass upon it and impanel a new one. It is as if, during a criminal trial, the jury should be changed when things began to look bad for the accused. On the charge and on the evidence, the jury in the box would have to find him guilty but they turn him out, let him