

features to which I wish to call attention, of which one is new and the other is not new. The new feature is that we have on the Treasury benches, at long last, a Solicitor General. It took a long time to fill that vacancy. The mantle remained suspended for something like two years, but at last it has fallen on the shoulders of my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie (Mr. Meighen). My compliments to the Solicitor General. I speak my mind frankly when I state that I believe he is well qualified for the position—well qualified from the legal point of view and still better qualified from the political point of view. He has been in this House for some years. It has been my pleasure to observe him almost from the day he came here; and almost from his first appearance we have had evidences not a few that he is endowed with a very subtle mind, that he is a past master dialectician. But, if I must speak my mind fully and give my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie all the credit to which he is entitled, I must say that while he is a clever dialectician, he is a still cleverer sophist. There are few men in this House or out of it who can clothe fallacies and paradoxes with more fitting garments than can the hon. gentleman. When it comes to the task of making the worse appear the better reason, few men can do more than my hon. friend the new Solicitor General. And, if the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster) were in his place, I would tell him that he had better look to his laurels, for even at his own game the Solicitor General can give him points. But the mystery to me is here: The qualifications of my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie were obvious; not only we but the public—everybody—knew them. Why, then, has it taken so long for my right hon. friend the Prime Minister to discover them? I cannot imagine that my right hon. friend with his acute mind did not see that which was obvious to everybody. The mystery is why he should have allowed twelve months, twenty-four months, to elapse, without filling the portfolio which he has at last filled. Of course, the reason may have been that, while he was as well aware as others of the qualifications of the hon. member for Portage la Prairie, yet that hon. member was not the only pebble on the beach. The beach was strewn with pebbles. Looking before me now, I can see one, two, three four, five, six—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Yes, six I can see, the friends of each of whom believed

that he was entitled to occupy the position, and each one of whom believed that he was more entitled to it than his neighbour. How is it that they have been left and my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie chosen? That is where the subtle mind of my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie served him. That subtle mind taught him that something more than legal ability must play a part in the choice to be made. He was not satisfied to show only his ability as a member of this House; he showed his teeth also. And when the Prime Minister saw those sharp teeth bared and ready to sink into his quivering flesh, all hesitation was gone.

You will remember that towards the end of last session the Bank Bill came back from the Senate, with some amendments. The Minister of Finance, who was in charge of the Bill, accepted the amendments, and explained them to the House. He said that they were trivial, nominal, and of no consequence; that although they were, perhaps, of some improvement to the measure, they affected in no way the principle of it. Thereupon there was a storm of indignation, or rather of pretended indignation, on the other side of the House. Some hon. gentlemen rose to protest, and the most valiant of these was the hon. member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Meighen). He attacked the amendments most violently; he said that they changed the whole tenor of the Bill; he shot at the Senate, which he could not reach, and over the heads of the Government, whom he wished not to hurt. It was more than an attack; it was a warning. The right hon. gentleman remembered a page in the parliamentary history of England upon which it is recorded that when Sir Robert Walpole was prime minister a young cavalry officer was elected to Parliament, and the moment he had spoken the Prime Minister said to his friends, 'that warhorse must be muzzled.' It is evident that when my hon. friend the Prime Minister heard the hon. member for Portage la Prairie, he said to himself that that hon. gentleman would have to be muzzled. Unfortunately, as my hon. friend has chosen the great William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, as his model, and as the Minister of Finance has gone so far as to approve the action of the Senate, my hon. friend the new Solicitor General will have to use his best ability to approve also, whatever may be his own feelings.

The other circumstance to which attention should be called, and one with which we are unfortunately commencing to be familiar, is the absence of my hon. friend the Minister of