

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat might very well speak for himself, but I think when he assumes the right to talk of the honesty of the intentions of members supporting the Government he is going a little too far. If evidence were wanted it could be found from many quarters to show that members on this side are just as independent in their action, as honest in their intention, as intelligent in what they do as hon. gentlemen opposite, and they are quite as anxious to understand and carry out the principles of responsible government. It seems to me there is a strange unanimity in the condemnation of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery by hon. gentlemen composing the Opposition. Every one of them has about the same story to tell, and there is something very strange in the coincidence that this story happens to come from those members who are to-day honored with an invitation to appear before the courts and show whether the transactions in which they were engaged during the elections were legal or illegal. They are very unanimous in their condemnation of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery; they say that the trouble is all due to the fact that he did not place their names in the *Gazette* at a certain time, but I think the courts and the judges will decide before very long that the trouble is due to some other cause. There is not an hon. gentleman in this House to-night who has satisfactorily shown that a single protest entered against an hon. member on the Opposition side is due to the fact that that member was gazetted a few days or weeks early or late. If he did no wrong why should he fear? It is not the honest man who is afraid of the law, but it is the man who has done illegal acts. The time is a matter of no consequence to him, if he committed no corrupt or illegal acts during the election, because he knows that such acts cannot be proven against him if he is innocent; but it is the party who has been doing illegal acts who is afraid. With him time is the essence of the agreement; he is anxious to get through the period of suspense as early as possible. During the argument on the Queen's county case the whole gist of the argument of hon. gentlemen opposite was that the returning officers were partisan and unfair, that they had not done their duty, while to-night their whole cry is against the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. It seems to me that, ever since the opening of the Session, the whole drift of the Opposition speeches has been an endeavor to show why they were defeated at the elections, why they have again been left in the cold shades of Opposition in this House. When they were before the people in the elections they said they were bound to succeed. They were confident they would carry the country, and a determined and persistent effort was kept up to strike down the character and reputation of every man supporting the Government. They failed in that policy, and now they come back chagrined and disappointed because they are still unable to convince a majority of the electorate that they are the honest and able men they represent themselves to be. The hon. member for Huron gave his reasons for their defeat. I remember distinctly the reasons which he gave in 1878 for their coming to this House in a minority—that the people had been deluded, and hoodwinked, and deceived, but that the time would come when they would awake to the truth, and when that time came the decision would be reversed. Well, that decision was not reversed in 1882, when they said the same thing—that the people were deluded and deceived into giving the verdict which they had given. The same cries were raised this present year when the elections took place; it was said that the verdict would be reversed. But that verdict was not reversed, and now the whole gist of their speeches is to explain why they happen to be sitting on the Opposition side to-day. They have to find some scape-goat—some Jonah; and the whole gist of their argument is directed against the returning officers,

and the revising officers, and the judges of the country. In the Queen's county election case they blamed the returning officer, but to-night one after another gets up, and yet they fail to give a single instance in which a returning officer did anything illegal and wrong. They are trying hard to find something to lay before the House and the country to show how they were defeated at the elections, and why they are now sitting where they are. They have at last hit upon this gentleman, who is a civil servant, and cannot come forward in his own defence; they have at last found a Jonah—a scape-goat, and the whole argument is directed against him. If I could satisfy myself that all the members of this House supporting the Government, or a majority of them, were gazetted within the prescribed time, and all those on the other side, or a majority of them, had not been gazetted within the same time, then I might presume that it was probable that this man had not done his duty fairly.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. That is the case.

Mr. SPROULE. But I find that members on both sides were not gazetted immediately after the return, according to the papers which have been laid before the House, and is it not so very inexplicable that it should be so? The hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Burdett) says that he is satisfied that if he had been gazetted by a certain time, a petition would not have been entered against him. The return was made on the 12th of March, and he was gazetted on the 19th. He was returned on the very day the *Gazette* came out, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery could not prepare all the returns that came in for the *Gazette* of that day. The hon. gentleman was gazetted in the next *Gazette*, and yet he complains that a protest has still been entered against him. He goes on to say that an understanding was entered into between the parties that they would countenance illegal acts, that both of them honorably agreed that they would refrain from entering a protest. But I ask, would that be honorable; would it not be winking at criminal or illegal acts? I say that if the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Burdett) knew of illegal acts being committed, he was just as culpable as the men who committed those acts if he refrained from taking steps to punish them. But I think he forgets that shortly after the elections, when John White was interviewed, he stated that he was in possession of sufficient information then to unseat the hon. gentleman; that he intended to do it, and now, because he is carrying out his intention, the hon. gentleman complains, and says that the member for the other riding should save him; that it was an understanding, because both were in delicate health, that there should be no protest, although there was evidence that he had committed illegal acts. Again, take the case of the hon. member for Prince Edward (Mr. Platt). Did not the hon. gentleman speak in a way which would have the effect of at least shaking the confidence of hon. gentlemen in his good intentions? He said: Why we are in a position to show not only that the sealed parcel was mailed to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery on a certain day, but to show that he received it on a certain day. He said: If the registry books of the post-office are not blotted, and if there has been no erasure upon them, we can show that they were received on a particular day. But I would ask the House if that is not an unfair and gratuitous presumption.

Mr. PLATT. Will the hon. gentleman allow me to correct him. He is putting words in my mouth which I did not use at all. I did not say anything about the blotting of the erasure of the post office books.

Mr. BLAKE. It was another man—the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Burdett).

Mr. SPROULE. I can only say that I withdraw the statement I made with reference to the hon. member for