

the just condemnation of every right thinking man in this country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing further to add at present, except to request my right hon. friend, before this matter is finally disposed of, to give to the House a statement as to whether the government has definitely determined to bring its policy before the House at the present session of parliament; and if the government has come to that determination, to inform the House on what day, on what early day, we may expect a full and detailed announcement of that policy. There is another thing I wish to mention before sitting down. I wish to inquire whether the right hon. gentleman is in a position to inform the House to-day, and if not, when he will be in a position to do so, as to the filling of the vacancy which has been occasioned by the retirement of my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals, whether any general reconstruction of the cabinet will be considered necessary, and what gentleman is it that has been selected to fill the vacancy so created.

Hon. J. I. TARTE (St. Mary's, Montreal). I am compelled to say a few words on this occasion. The 'News' of yesterday, published an article from which I quote the following words:

The Rift in the Cabinet.

The dissension in the Ottawa Cabinet which led to Mr. Blair's resignation is presented by certain Conservative journals as an evidence of weakness in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's leadership. Nothing could be further from the truth. In view of the Premier's peremptory dismissal of Mr. Tarte from his cabinet and his ready acceptance of Mr. Blair's resignation, it is idle to maintain the old fiction that Sir Wilfrid Laurier lacks decision and strength of character. The general opinion among Conservatives was that the Premier dare not dismiss Mr. Tarte, while the mere fact that New Brunswick goes Liberal gave to oppositionists probably a very similar opinion of the strength of Mr. Blair and of his ascendancy in the cabinet. As a matter of fact, for the last three or four years neither man had any particular influence in the councils of the government. Neither had the confidence of his colleagues. Both were marked for certain decapitation when the necessity arose. Both these men seemed to the public to be shaping the ministerial policy. In each case the fact was quite the reverse of what the oppositionists argued and the general public believed. Both were heralded as efficient departmental heads; neither, in fact, was a particularly capable administrator.

How things go in the world! A few months ago the ministerial newspapers took no exception and nearly all my colleagues were of the opinion that I was a very capable Minister of Public Works. In point of fact I was heralded as the ablest Minister of Public Works that had occupied this office since Mackenzie, which I did not deserve, I admit. But that is not the point to which I desire to especially draw the attention of parliament. It is pointed out

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax.)

in this article, which I understand has been inspired from the treasury benches—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. As other articles have been in the past to my knowledge—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. It is plainly stated that neither my hon. friend who has just left office (Hon. Mr. Blair) nor myself has had the confidence of his colleagues during the last three or four years. Let me say that as far as I am concerned this is the first time that I have heard such news. I have not always agreed with my colleagues. Any body who has been a minister will grant that all members of the government cannot be of the same mind, but with most of my former associates I have had the most pleasant and cordial relations. I grant that I had opponents. I am very much afraid that I even had enemies. For the last year or two marked for decapitation because we did not have the confidence of our colleagues! The right hon. Prime Minister is the leader of the government. Could it be possible that the right hon. gentleman would have kept me or my hon. friend (Hon. Mr. Blair) in his council, or would he have kept me in his intimacy marking me at the same time for decapitation? Such a suggestion is not possible.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. It is not possible.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. And I think that the 'News' is not building a pedestal for my right hon. friend in history in circulating stories of that kind. It seems to me that it cannot be imagined that the right hon. leader of the government could keep in his intimacy, as he has done me the honour to keep me in his intimacy, a cabinet minister who for the last three or four years did not possess his confidence. It may be that my ability has not been equal to my good will. I have done my duty to the best of my ability and my colleagues—most of them from the right hon. Prime Minister down—have been good enough to give me credit for my humble efforts. I have been six years and a half a member of the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, an important position; I have been six years and a half a member of the treasury board, another responsible and confidential position. Now, immediately after my resignation—not dismissal, because I resigned out of my free will—the 'Star,' the personal organ of the hon. Postmaster General (Hon. Sir William Mulock) stated that I was disgruntled and displeased because I did not exercise over the government all the influence, that, perhaps, in the mind of that paper, I should have exercised. I have exercised all the influence that I could de-