

A Weak Opposition.

The fact that we have been 32 years in power is no reason for a change, though it may naturally be a reason for some Ministers changing. If you are going to change—from what to what?—to these men who have not shown in Opposition any great capacity for Government?—and I am not saying anything unkind. I want to present facts and arguments, not criticism. The Legislature passed during my administration 610 bills, of which 220 were public bills and 390 were private bills. I want you to look over the records of the House and see how much of that large volume of legislation is to be credited to the Opposition. You judge trees by their fruit. They have the same opportunities as we have in public questions except those affecting the revenue. Look over the 220 public bills, you will not find perhaps in all the legislation a line on the statute book covered by these bills more than two or three pages which properly belong to the constructive work of the Opposition. The Opposition at Ottawa under Edward Blake and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Opposition at Toronto under Sir William Meredith had some constructive power. But the Opposition in Ontario have fallen on days of sterility, and yet they asked that the Government be put out of office. I am not reflecting on them personally; I am speaking of them as public men, as to their capacity to legislate usefully or efficiently for the Province of Ontario.

"It is Time For a Change."

Now, it is easy for a Conservative to run up to Mr. Madole and say, "It is time for a change." If Conservatives were in power would they say so? We said so in 1896. The Conservatives had been in power at Ottawa for eighteen years; we said then it was time for a change, and we proved it. (Applause.) What was the position of the Government at Ottawa? Sir Hector Langevin had been practically forced to retire from his seat in the Government because of his connection with contract scandals. Mr. McGreevy was sent to the common jail because he had dabbled as a member of Parliament in contracts; Sir Adolphe Caron admitted he had spent \$20,000 on the elections in Quebec, and that he would do it again, and there was the Curran bridge scandal, and scandals of so many kinds which proved that the Administration then in power had forfeited its rights to the confidence of the people. (Mr. Ross also referred to the bolt of the seven members of Sir Mackenzie Bowell's Cabinet, and, amid cheers, pointed out that there were no such scandals in connection with his Government, nor were there such internal intrigues as existed in the Conservative party.) Members of the Government must be loyal to each other. If they are not how can they be loyal to the country? Our Administration has not been connected with any political immorality in the last thirty-four years. There are what are called "election scandals," to which I will refer presently.