

we have lost confidence in your ability to continue to direct the affairs of the country," then I could have understood it. Then I could have said, "Take the reins of Government; I will not stand in the way." And I never shall stand in the way of the future success of that great party to which I have had the honour of belonging from boyhood up, and towards which I have done something for its prosperity and continuance in governing. You will note, however, one sentence in this explanation which might leave a false impression upon the minds of the readers in the country. I refer to this paragraph:—

This we have repeatedly urged upon the Premier, with the result that we found ourselves face to face with Parliament having a Government with its numbers incomplete, and with no assurance that the present Premier could satisfactorily complete it.

He says "nevertheless we have unitedly and loyally striven to the best of our ability to make it strong and efficient." That is referring to the Government. I shall not comment upon that statement. I could, however, characterize it in other language than that in which the sentence is couched, and more than that, with no less degree of truth. Then they state that they waited upon me repeatedly, in order to insist upon the Government being strengthened in its personnel. That is quite true, but is there a single word in any of those sentences which would lead you or might lead others, after what has been whispered about the country, to conclude that it was the head of the Government they were striking at instead of the other members of the Government? It is true that they waited upon me and pointed out the necessity of strengthening the Government, as all governments ought to be strengthened, and according to my own views, I should acquiesce in any proposition of that kind, and there were intimations at those interviews pointing to certain members of the Government who, in their opinion, ought to go out. Certainly they never meant themselves, because from their statement one would suppose that all the wisdom was concentrated in their craniums. But there were others of whom they had not such exalted opinions; had they intimated to me that I was one of them, I should have made way for them, but I heard nothing of that until two days after Parliament had met. I make this explanation in order that I may show the nature of their anxiety for the strengthening of the Government. My hon. friend opposite

me has had some little experience during the five years he had the responsibilities of office resting on his shoulders. At least if he had not, the newspapers of the day and rumours of political opponents were not correct. Having said that much in reference to this explanation, and so far as it affects myself personally, I leave it; and I leave myself, whatever may be my future, in the hands of my countrymen who can judge whether a life of some 50 years, to a greater or less extent spent in politics, in conducting a journal advocating the policy of the party with which I have been connected from its inception until the present day, and about 30 years of parliamentary life, justifies the position that my late colleagues have taken or the imputation which they have cast upon my character and on my reputation as a politician. I leave it to the country and to those who know me, and to those who do not know me—to those who are directly my political opponents—to say whether my conduct has ever been otherwise than that of a straightforward, perhaps a blunt politician, always ready to express my sentiments and to cast my vote with my party in the interests of the country, and with some little ability at least. Now there is another point which I think it is just as well to deal with:—They say they retired because the Government is not complete. Let me ask of those who have read parliamentary history, let me ask of those who have had any political experience, whether it is a reason why men should desert a government because, forsooth, one of its portfolios is not filled up, while at the same time the country is crying out and condemning the government for having too many members—a condition of things for which they as well as myself were responsible, and are responsible to-day. I may add here that the instances which my hon. friend who leads the Opposition mentioned the other day are not, I think—and I say it respectfully—at all parallel with the present case.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I did not profess that they were—there was justification. There are instances, but not parallel instances.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—There are instances of resignations, but not instances of the peculiar nature which characterizes these resignations. I have precedents with which I shall not weary the House,