

his own document, in his very great desire—for some reason or other—to take up and discuss the manifesto of the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden.) It almost seemed that matters had been reversed and that the real speech from the Throne was the manifesto of the Liberal-Conservative leader. I have had a seat in this House for a good many years, but I have never seen such proceedings indulged in by a prime minister in the debate on the address. Leaving the points with which it was his clear duty to deal, and which he himself declared important, he devoted nearly the whole of his time and energy in attempting—in his own peculiar way—to cast ridicule upon the platform laid down by my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) beside me. The first fifteen minutes of his address upon that subject was very good opera bouffe, but it was not much else. It seemed to be sufficient to please hon. gentlemen behind him, and I hope they will long have a lively recollection of the comic way in which their leader treated this part of his subject. But what was the matter with my right hon. friend? He had been studying that manifesto; he had been swallowing that manifesto; he had been trying to digest that manifesto—and it had evidently proved a pretty hard process, so hard that he has been obliged to set at naught the rules of practice in the discussion of the King's speech from the Throne, and give his whole force to an endeavour to break the strength of the platform of the Liberal-Conservative party. While I call attention to this fact, I wish to have a word or two to say upon the right hon. gentleman's comment upon that document. He declared that this was not solid nor was it liquid; it was elastic and capable of expansion or contraction; that everything in it was qualified; that each clause had an 'if' or a 'but'; that there was no finality in it; that the hon. gentleman who proposed it argued one way and concluded another; his argument being good so far as it went, but his conclusion tending in one instance to the conclusion declared for by my hon. friend (Mr. W. F. Maclean) who sits here to my left. Now, really, was that an accurate statement? An ounce of fact is worth many pounds of such highfalutin as we have heard from the right hon. gentleman here to-night. I have here the platform as it was laid down. I challenge the right hon. gentleman to read it clause by clause and to point out the 'ifs' and 'ands' and 'buts' in it. They are not there—they are only in my right hon. friend's imagination. That was a peculiarly apt summing up of my right hon. friend that was made by one of the members of the colonial conference in England. When they were discussing some question—I have forgotten exactly what it was—some one suggested that what was wanted was a name or a phrase that would strike the public imagination and win favour, and the answer came, quick as a flash, 'We

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must apply to Sir Wilfrid Laurier for that.' So these 'ifs' and 'ands' and 'buts' are in his imagination—though he had the document in his hand which contradicted the statement he made. These declarations of the platform are plain and definite. Let me read one:

Honest appropriation and expenditure of public moneys in the public interest.

Are there any 'ifs' or 'ands' or 'buts' about that? Is there a single redundant word? Is there a man who sits behind the right hon. gentleman who does not understand it, and he knows that the people of this country are beginning to understand it, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific they are calling out against men who do not honestly appropriate or honestly expend the public moneys in the public interest and are calling for men who will carry out this plank of the platform. And here is another:

Appointment of public officials upon considerations of capacity and personal character and not for party services alone.

Is that not direct and to the point? Does not that carry its meaning upon its face? Does not my right hon. friend understand it? He understands it only too well, for he knows that if ever the leader of a ministry in this country has been guilty of bedevilling the public service that man sits opposite me in the person of my right hon. friend. He it is who has trafficked in offices, from judgeships down to the lowest. This commenced when he bought and sold judgeships and governorships to his friend Langeier almost before his feet had begun to tread the paths of office to which he had been called. It has been his strong point; it has been his invariable practice from that time to this, until there is no department of the public service, inside or outside, that does not show the deleterious and injurious effects of this policy and these methods that have been brought into our administration by the right hon. gentleman himself. There is no doubt about it. The hon. gentleman does not know it? The right hon. gentleman certainly knows that he has thieves and embezzlers in the public service to-day. When it was brought to his attention and he and his supporters were challenged on it, he stood up like a little man and voted that it was right and proper to keep these thieves and embezzlers in office. Every man in the civil service, outside and in, knows what all Canada knows about this. But how can you expect men to be filled with the pride, the emulation and the ambition which my right hon. friend spoke about to do their best in the service of the country, when that service is bedevilled in that way from one end of it to the other, outside and inside? I think that is plain enough. There are no 'ifs' or 'ands' about that.

More effective provisions to punish bribery and fraud at elections, to ensure thorough