

of a huge job, if they are not attempting to perpetrate it now, their ignorance is such that it is almost criminal; and I hope before I get through my observations to be able to show that I have some ground for impaling these hon. gentlemen on either horn of the dilemma, and they can choose upon which to remain. The Solicitor General, to whom I must first pay some attention, ventured to taunt the leader of the Opposition with a change of base, a change of opinion. Hon. gentlemen opposite, when in a difficult position of this kind, have been eager to refer to the endorsement which they claim the leader of the Opposition at one time gave to this scheme. Well, coming from the Solicitor General I suppose he is an authority on a change of base. I suppose there is no man in this House who ever pledged himself to a certain course and then took a more opposite course than the Solicitor General.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I challenge that statement, let us set that at rest now. Last session when that statement was made, I said in the House that the gentleman to whom I gave that pledge was the best judge as to whether I had fulfilled it. I made that statement publicly, and I challenge hon. gentlemen on the other side to show that it has never been carried out or fulfilled.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. If the hon. gentleman would go further and state what the pledge was, and then what he did, it would be unnecessary for me to say any more. I do not wish to misrepresent the hon. gentleman.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. You are doing it now.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. But I am basing my criticisms upon the remarks the hon. gentleman made, and if he will tell us what the pledge was and what he did, I will not add another word. But let us see whether he is fair. In the first place when the leader of the Opposition gave an opinion upon that subject, he had not this contract before him any more than the Solicitor General had; he, no more than the Solicitor General, ever dreamed that the colleagues of the Solicitor General would go about so serious a matter as this without any understanding, or any reliable arrangement with the people who had it in their power to thwart and destroy the whole scheme, whether right or wrong. Many things have occurred and have been explained to this House, which would enable gentlemen who had formed an opinion at the outset, to change it and to deserve commendation for the change. If I recollect aright the leader of the Opposition at the time to which the Solicitor General referred, laid great stress on this work being vigorously pressed forward as a Government work; but surely no man who heard the

leader of the Opposition dissect the terms of that contract, and no gentlemen in this House, the Solicitor General himself included would be so mad as to contend that, having the information he had when he made his speech, he could have possibly entertained the opinion for a single moment to which the hon. gentleman referred. That information was such as to lead him, and to lead a great many gentlemen on this side of the House, and outside of the House altogether, to only one opinion, and that was in condemnation of this extraordinary proposition. Then the hon. gentleman refers to the action of the United States Senate as having been brought about at the instigation of the Opposition.

An hon. MEMBER. Hear, hear.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. It was the Opposition of a few years ago, and the hon. gentleman who said "hear, hear," knows it was correct. The Opposition for many years in this House and out of it took such a course, as has already been explained, so as to lead any man who follows Canadian affairs to believe that the moment those hon. gentlemen occupied the Treasury benches, then every desire that had been nursed in the breast of many American citizens to get advantages at the cost of Canada out of Canada would be granted. Those hon. gentlemen were willing to compromise us or to grant concessions at our expense time and again. The St. Thomas speech and the Chicago interview mentioned this afternoon should have prevented the Solicitor General making so reckless a statement, unless when he referred to the Opposition, he meant the Liberal Opposition of a few years ago.

I have some reason, however, to quarrel with the Solicitor General for the manner in which he has dealt with a subject which in his hands I think he ought to have exercised more candour about than he did. The hon. gentleman was hard driven when speaking for the Government of Canada he gave such a representation of the authorities on international law as he did when discussing the Treaty of 1871, and the rights of upper proprietors of a river in regard to navigation over the river below when it went through another country to that to which the upper part of the river belonged. The hon. gentleman referred to Wheaton. Wheaton, of course, was an American authority. He referred also to Phillimore, and I am bound to suppose that he seemed to me to make a most unfair statement of Phillimore's opinion, because in that statement—and he would not otherwise have referred to it—he made it appear that Phillimore and Wheaton agreed, and every one knows that Phillimore was a great authority on international law. Let us see exactly what the passage to which the hon. gentleman referred was, and then we will understand to what desperate straits the

Sir C H T—14