

panies, etc. Everything could not be purchased by tender, but all that might reasonably be purchased in that way was. The Opposition had not made out a case in their arguments upon the question of reasonable time so far as the return of the absent Ministers is concerned. When the Government spoke they found fault; when the Government remained silent they found more fault; when the Government was complete they wished to turn it out; when two members were missing they wanted it to resign. He was afraid they could not satisfy the hon. gentlemen. He denied that Sir William R. Meredith had anything to do with the inception of the Government's mining policy. Mr. Hoyles (North Ontario) denied this, and said Mr. Meredith had outlined his policy in London in 1889. Mr. Conmee said he might have, but he did not outline it in the House. He acknowledged that Mr. Meredith supported the Government's mining policy in 1892. On that occasion Mr. Conmee was the only man who opposed that policy. Mr. Meredith supported it; he always supported the Government when it was wrong. (Laughter.) Mr. Conmee twitted the Opposition with denouncing imaginary evils in Ontario when they supported on the platform and by their votes the Government which had perpetrated the McGreevy and Curran bridge scandals. He quoted as an authority on Conservative wrong-doing Mr. Carscallen, "that luminary who came from the top of the Hamilton mountain." Mr. Carscallen once said: "With the Dominion Government it was a constant grab for every cent of money that hands could be laid on, from every source, to be put into the treasury and fished out by contractors who contributed to the election fund." (Government applause.)

Mr. Wardell (North Wentworth) followed on the Conservative side, dealing with retroactive legislation, and suggesting that the Premier might pass a bill making himself permanent leader of the Government and making his Cabinet a permanent one. He might, while at it, pass an act declaring that the two absent Ministers were duly elected. Mr. Wardell charged that Mr. Conmee had once turned Conservative, that he had been doing the Government for a Cabinet place and threatening to vote against the Government if he did not get it.

Mr. Hardy—Never!

Mr. Conmee—I never asked this Government nor any other Government for a Cabinet position. (Government applause.)

Mr. Wardell said that the contrary had been reported, and went on to accuse Mr. Conmee of being unduly interested in mining locations; of introducing legislation presumably in the interests of Port Arthur, but really in favor of himself alone.

Mr. Conmee—I must again direct the attention of the hon. gentleman to the fact that I have not owned, never did own and do not now own a mining location in the Province of Ontario.

Mr. Hardy said that Mr. Wardell would either have to take the responsibility for his arguments or abandon

that kind of argument. Mr. Hardy said Mr. Wardell had better withdraw his statement.

Mr. Wardell said he was repeating what had been currently reported, and Mr. Conmee said that if a member was permitted to make hearsay charges he could slander any member of the House.

Mr. Wardell—I am sorry, sir, I have stirred up—

Mr. Conmee—No, you have not stirred up anything. You should not take newspaper skits seriously. (Laughter.)

Hon. Mr. Ross' Reply.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross was greeted with Government cheers when he rose to reply. He pointed out that it would be impossible for the Government to call Parliament at any time that it would not be inconvenient for some members of the House. But if it was inconvenient for hon. members of the House, it does not seem to be inconvenient for hon. gentlemen opposite to persist in continuing the session and remaining with them so long a time. (Government cheers.) It had been said that the House had not met for public business at all; that it was purely a session for party purposes. He thought there was business of vast public concern before this Parliament; in fact, hon. gentlemen seemed to greatly concern themselves about the business they are offered, that there will be too much business to suit them. He thought it an important session. What is the business? he asked. Was it not to protect the franchise, the sacred trust committed to the Legislature by the people of the country? Could there be any more important matter for the House to have under consideration? The greatest battles in the British House of Commons had been those waged for the extension of the franchise rights of the people, and perhaps one of the most splendid contests within his memory in the House of Commons—in connection with the franchise bill of 1885, which was happily repealed last year—(cheers)—and the only time when the House had sat for about twenty-four hours, was when a matter affecting the franchise of the people was under discussion. Over 300,000 people on the first of March last declared their wills in the ballot box. (Government cheers.) The crowning act, the kingliest act of freedom, is the freeman's vote. Three hundred thousand of them performed the kingly act, and by 7,000 they had expressed their confidence in the Government, and they were there to see that the will of the people is carried out, and he thought hon. gentlemen opposite would agree that Parliament had been convened for one of the most important duties committed to it. Then they had to deal with that most important industry, the fisheries, amounting to about \$2,000,000 in value, and employing two thousand men. Surely these were matters of sufficient importance to engage the attention for a few weeks at least of the Legislature. (Cheers.) But hon. gentlemen said that the session, so far as the constables' vote is concerned, is a party session. He asked what hon. gentlemen are discussing in this debate: are they discuss-