

sitting at St. Thomas. That was the time to have sought for further inquiry into the conduct of criminals.

Mr. Lucas—Drowning men will grasp at a straw. I am prepared to acquit the Government of wrongdoing if they will do right now. (Opposition applause.) The Government met the charge of corruption by saying that both sides were equally bad, and by enumerating Conservative acts of wrongdoing in the past. That was a poor kind of defence, and would not satisfy the people. He laid down the principle that no Government or party could be held responsible for corruption of a merely local character. It was a different matter, however, where the head organization assumed charge in several constituencies under the direction of one who enjoyed confidential relations with the Government. In such a case if the Government neglected to make a thorough and impartial investigation they were equally as guilty as the actual criminals. (Opposition applause.) If the Government did not back down from their present position, take the risk of further confessions and order a thorough inquiry they would be swept away by a deluge at the next election. (Opposition applause.)

West Lambton's Member.

Mr. Pardee (West Lambton) congratulated the Premier upon attaining his present high position, and also offered his congratulations to Messrs. Stratton and Litchford upon their elevation to the Cabinet. He expressed his sense of the distinct loss which the House had sustained in the retirement of Hon. A. S. Hardy, and paid a tribute to that gentleman's talents and great services to Ontario. The war in South Africa was not without its gains. The preferential tariff of the Dominion Government had brought Britain and Canada together as had nothing else which had occurred previously, and now the unity of the empire was being cemented by the blood of the brave Canadian volunteers who had fallen in South Africa. We lamented the death of Canada's sons, but it was a consolation to know that they fell in defence of great and glorious principles. (Ministerial applause.) Mr. Pardee dissented from the view that electoral corruption was the main issue before the country. Both sides deplored the wrongdoing that had occurred, but the Opposition would not succeed in their efforts to place in the background the great questions of policy which the Premier had announced in his Whitby speech. These important matters must be kept in the forefront and promptly given effect to. The Opposition had hitherto failed to show in what respect they could improve upon the Government measures which had been promised. Mr. Pardee approved of the policy of securing the manufacture of raw materials in the Province, of aiding New Ontario and of helping the farmers by means of cold storage. There had been continual bickerings in the past over the financial position of the Province, and the question of whether or not there was a surplus. It was a very proper thing on the part of the Government to appoint

a commission of experts to demonstrate the facts, and settle the questions in dispute for all time. He could not understand the objection of the Opposition to the West Elgin commission. He recollected a speech delivered by the Opposition leader wherein the latter stated that he had abundant evidence, and if given a commission of Judges the Conservatives would have all the offenders in jail. If the Conservatives had evidence which they could substantiate, why did they not produce it before the commission? Their failure to do so led to the belief that they were not anxious to probe these matters to the bottom for fear of uncovering Conservative wrongdoing. They contented themselves with charging that Liberal elections were corruptly won. The Conservative record was a very unsavory one. The Opposition did not raise an outcry when wrongdoing was brought to light in their own ranks, but seemed to be sorry that it had been found out. Mr. Macdiarmid lost his seat on the occasion of his first election on account of corruption.

Mr. Macdiarmid said there was no agency established, and both parties agreed that there should be a new election.

The Reason For Forfeiture.

Mr. Pardee—I have always understood that the hon. gentleman forfeited his seat rather than go on with the investigation. (Ministerial applause.) Continuing, Mr. Pardee expressed his inability to understand why the Conservatives had not instituted a private prosecution in West Elgin, which was perfectly open to them to do. Had it been a case of Conservative bribers who were being proceeded against, the Opposition would have raised an outcry against the Government intervening instead of allowing the law to take its course. In the case of Dominion elections Conservative corruption was so glaring that, compared with what the Liberals had done, it was as a giant to a pigmy. And in the case of Provincial elections he pointed out that thousands of dollars had been spent in the attempt to elect Mr. Calder in South Ontario. Mr. Pardee was prepared to put down corrupt practices, but in view of the Conservative record he could not stomach their pretensions to be considered the party of purity. It was all very well to bring corruption to the front, but he thought the people would vote their approval of the wise and statesmanlike measures of the Government, which were intended to settle and develop the newer districts of the Province, to promote the well-being and prosperity of the inhabitants of the older sections and to raise Ontario to a still higher plane than it occupied today. The Government would be endorsed in preference to a party who had not enunciated one single measure that was calculated to place Ontario in a better position than it was at the present time. (Ministerial applause.)

Mr. Barr Talks.

Mr. Barr (Dufferin) charged the Government with stealing the Conservative clothes in regard to timber and nickel. The clothes did not fit them, however, and they felt very uneasy. He attri-