

under any circumstances—(renewed applause)—but we desire that the evidence shall be taken, and that the charges shall be investigated and reported upon by a tribunal away above suspicion, away above political partisanship, a tribunal that is accustomed to the trial of similar matters in the shape of election petitions day by day, accustomed to trials of every nature, and whose judgment will be respected and accepted by the public of this Province as satisfactory, whatever they may do. (Applause.) I do not choose to follow the hon. gentleman in the course which he adopted in making insinuations, and here and there rather insulting references to members of the Government. I do not choose to take up even a moment's time in hurling back the insinuation that the hon. gentleman made in his remarks that my own department has not been administered with the same regard of the public interest, with the same regard of purity, of method and impartiality of conduct, as it had been administered in the past before my time. (Ministerial applause.)

Sneers and Jeers.

I do not care for his sneers and jeers so long as my own conscience is satisfied. So long as I have the approval of the public in this Province with reference to the manner in which I have administered the somewhat important functions of the department over which I preside, I shall be satisfied, and perfectly oblivious, perfectly regardless of the sneers and jeers of my hon. friend. (Ministerial applause.)

Now, with reference to the matter involved, what is the natural, the reasonable, thing to do? This House ought to be prepared, ought to be disposed, regardless as to which side hon. members sit upon, in the case of grave charges it ought to be disposed to do the reasonable, the fair thing in reference to the investigation of these charges. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that we should come here every afternoon, one after the other, week after week, perhaps, while this investigation is going on before the commission in another part of the building, taking evidence in the forenoon and slang-whanging each other in the house in the afternoon? (Ministerial applause.) I venture to say that the people of this Province will bear out the Government in the course they propose to take; that the people of this Province will also let that investigation be free from political surroundings. (Ministerial applause.)

Free from Political Taint.

Let the Judges sit. Let the counsel, eminent counsel, be engaged to put forward the contentions of both sides of the question. Let the witnesses be summoned. Let the whole investigation take place in an atmosphere free from the taint of political partisanship, free from the heated atmosphere which necessarily prevails within—I was going to say within forty miles of the hon. gentleman when he gets worked up to fever heat. (Ministerial applause.) The evidence will be taken. The evidence will be brought out, not by the Government prosecuting itself. The hon. gentleman knew better than that, but he chose to draw a herring across the scent, as he so often does in connection with discussions of this nature. He knew that the Government do not propose to control the prosecution of these charges. He knew that the hon. gentleman who makes the charge, and, I suppose, his political friends who advised him, would be perfectly free to select their own counsel and their own junior counsel with reference to those charges. What could be fairer than that, I would like anyone to suggest?

Mr. Whitney—You could not before the last commission.

Division Court Advocacy.

Mr. Gibson—We are discussing the present. That is a species of Division Court advocacy which the hon. gentleman frequently reverts to in this House. I would like to know if anything could be more reasonable, more considerate of the interest and confidence even of those who propose to make these charges, and propose to

establish them if they can, than what is suggested and proposed by this resolution, and by the remarks of my hon. friend the Premier. It cannot be argued, and it was not argued by my hon. friend, that this is not the best method of investigation. He made reference to one thing and another, and did not discuss the relative merits of the two tribunals to which these charges could possibly go. (Ministerial applause.) It was not germane to the question for the hon. gentleman to deal with a great deal that formed the subject of his speech. I would have supposed that with his experience and the length of time he has occupied and the prominent position he sits in, he would have refrained while a matter of this kind was sub judice, to be investigated, to be reported upon, from making any reference to the commission.

Showed Questionable Taste.

He showed questionable taste in attempting to convict members of the Government, and in re-arguing the views that appear in the statement delivered here yesterday. (Ministerial applause.) I think I see his predecessors occupying his position. I think I see leaders of political parties in other Parliaments occupying similar positions, but I do not connect them with even the tendency of such exhibitions of partisanship as the hon. gentleman has given to the House this afternoon. When the hon. gentleman should be in his most judicial frame of mind, when he should display calmness, when he should display toleration, as the Premier has, in any reference he has made to the serious matter under discussion, he affects the reverse course; he fancies himself out in the country on a political platform, abusing everyone right and left, and forgets that there is such a thing as a judicial temper or a time for judicial utterance or judicial treatment of a great question.

Communication With Government.

Now, we have been abused because there has been some disposition on the part of some of the departments to communicate with or receive communications from the hon. member for Manitoulin. Well, I was out in the country shortly after the elections took place, but I do not think I had been back very long when it seemed to be commonly accepted that the hon. member for Manitoulin was by no means a servile follower of the hon. gentleman, and desired that it should be known; that the hon. member from Manitoulin was as likely to support the Government as he was to support the hon. gentlemen. Indeed, I have a distinct recollection of his expressions having been reported to me (I do not claim to have heard them from the hon. gentleman himself, because I have not had the pleasure of knowing him until very recently), as having been made use of during his own campaign. They were that he had no use for the leader of the Opposition, and, that being the case, Mr. Speaker, and the Government being sustained, no one was very much surprised to learn that the hon. member for Manitoulin might feel disposed to pursue a thoroughly independent course. Because any hon. member is elected in Opposition to the Government, there is no bar of communication.

Mr. Gamey—Let me tell the hon. gentleman that what he says that I said during the campaign is absolutely and positively false.

Mr. Gibson—All I can say is that the hon. gentleman has been very widely and generally maligned.

Rights of Members.

Even so impartial a man in his political leanings and proclivities as the hon. gentleman from Carleton (Mr. Kidd), who made a remark or two just now, would not think it an outrage to have some communication with a member of the Government—(laughter)—and I am rather pleased sometimes to have such communications, whether they are oral or otherwise. The business of the country must be transacted, and any member of this House is justified in communicating—and most members of the House, whether on this side or that, do take it upon themselves to communicate—with the Gov-

ernment from time to time regarding public matters. Now I am not saying that they expect or that they receive the benefit of political patronage. They neither expect it, nor do they, as a rule, enjoy it. But there are many matters which are not the subject of political patronage, in which the Government as well as Opposition members have interests in common, those interests being to do the right thing under the circumstances as cases arise. The hon. member may have had communications with departments of this Government. I think even his own friends would be surprised to find the leader of the Opposition endeavoring to file an indictment against a member of the Government because such things take place. That sort of argument is extremely puerile, and unworthy of the hon. gentleman. (Ministerial applause.)

House Must Adjourn.

Now we are told that the adjournment for a period of three weeks is emasculating the Legislature of the functions of the Legislature. I leave it to any fair-minded member of this House whether we should not dispose of these grave charges before we proceed with the ordinary duties of Parliament. What would be the sense of endeavoring to discharge our ordinary legislative functions when such an inquiry was in progress? Everyone knows that this could not be done satisfactorily; everyone knows that both the inquiry itself and our deliberations would be retarded if we attempted such a thing, and we do not propose to do so.

References were made by my hon. friend to other investigations, and it is a remarkable thing that when he cannot find the authority that he usually follows he hunts up authority that he does not usually follow, and he adopts that by way of argument.

The Long Ago.

About forty years—well, not so long ago as that—some years ago at least, my hon. friend the Premier, who was then a colt in politics—(laughter)—in the Commons, attended a meeting in one of the committee rooms, an indignation meeting my hon. friend calls it. Mr. Whitney—No; the hon. gentleman in his book calls it that. I don't. Hon. Mr. Gibson—Well, my hon. friend quoted that as an indignation meeting, and the House would be very much relieved to have that made clear. (Ministerial applause.) Some resolutions were passed, and he (Mr. Whitney) quotes that as an argument on his behalf. He uses ninety-nine one-hundredths of his time opposing everything that the Premier of this Province suggests or advocates—(Ministerial laughter)—and then he takes what suits his partisanship, adopts it, and he wants to condemn the Premier by the use of that. (Ministerial applause.)

The Proper Procedure.

There have been great changes since those early days. We all know that the tendency of modern times is toward tribunals of a reasonable nature in connection with the investigations of charges of this kind, and as time goes on the practice in this respect will be more uniform, and, as I have said, Committees on Privileges and Elections, now practically obsolete, will eventually become absolutely obsolete and be discontinued. I think it is years since the Committee on Privileges and Elections of this House has ever been more than a mere committee on paper. But we do not abrogate our functions. We do not, simply by reason of referring this question to two eminent Judges before whom evidence will be taken, and who will give us the benefit of their report on the evidence, we do not abrogate our functions.

The House Free to Act.

That report will come before this House just exactly in the same way as the report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections would. We may deal with it as the wisdom dictates; we are not obliged to adopt the views of the Judges; we are not obliged to be controlled by their findings. We will have the evidence which they will submit with their findings, and if we think they are wrong, we may dis-