

regard the conclusions to which they arrive. But, sir, that report will come to the House as a direct contrast to the report which would come from the Committee on Privileges and Elections. It will come as a measure of deliberation by two men thoroughly independent of all considerations of expediency; thoroughly independent of all unworthy considerations, and it will be, I trust, their combined view as to what the legitimate result of the investigation should be. (Ministerial applause.) It will, therefore, have the sanction which the finding of no committee would have. It will be to this House that which the finding of no partisan majority could be expected to be, and I was surprised not a little, when the Premier's proposition was made today, that there should have been any question in accepting it. I really expected that my hon. friend would have said that the suggestions were of such a nature as to commend themselves to his good judgment and approval; that they would have been met without discussion, and that this matter would have been allowed to go to the tribunal free from the noise and the acrimonious discussion which the hon. gentleman has initiated in connection with it, and would have been treated with that seriousness and impartiality with which so grave a matter is entitled to be treated. (Ministerial applause.)

A Manly Stand.

I am one of the three members of the Government, I suppose, to whom the hon. gentleman has made reference. I believe my name does appear incidentally in the statement (of Mr. Gamey), but I think if the statement were admitted to be true from beginning to end he would not be a fair-minded man who would say that there was anything that I had the right or any reason to be ashamed of. (Ministerial applause.) And yet this impartial judge, this hon. member who is afraid of an injustice being committed on this House if he does not administer that justice through the committee, this hon. gentleman who, of course, would be a member of this committee, condemns me. I am guilty—(Ministerial laughter and applause)—and that is the sort of tribunal before which I am to be brought. (Renewed Ministerial applause.) If the most eminent members of the Bench of this country come to the conclusion that I, in connection with the circumstances under which my name has been mentioned in this statement, am blameworthy and censurable, I am quite prepared to accept the conclusions. I am quite prepared to accept the conclusions if, moreover, the Judges who discharge the grave and important duties which those appointed will discharge in connection with this matter, come to the conclusion that my hon. friend, or any of my hon. friends who are my colleagues, have been guilty of the grave charges which have been referred to, have been guilty of conduct which cannot be approved, guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, or whatever they may be termed. If they come to these conclusions I am prepared to bow to their decision and with my colleagues accept the responsibility. More than that we shall not be asked to do. It will be our duty to go, and we are prepared to go, before a fair and impartial tribunal and submit our case there.

Mr. Whitney Corrected.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that this sort of discussion on the part of my hon. friend has sprung up. We have even been treated to West Elgin, to references to which the House throughout the last Parliament heard from time to time every session, and the hon. gentleman says "hear, hear." He referred to my predecessor, the Attorney-General. I wish to say that this is not the first time the hon. gentleman has done me an injustice in referring to this, and I wish now to correct him. I have done so before, and I do so now. I have never said, it was never said in this House, it was never said by me with reference to the public being taken into confidence regarding the destruction of the ballots of West Elgin, that my predecessor desired to make that public and was persuaded or prevented from doing so by his colleagues. What I did say, and I cannot help thinking that my hon. friend must have known it, was that he gave the matter consideration as to whether a reasonable opportunity could be taken of making the announcement of that fact, but he ultimately came to the conclusion that it should be deferred until the matter naturally arrived before the commission.

Mr. Whitney—There is no member of this House who has less reason to complain than the distinguished gentleman who has just spoken. Now, I say this at once, Mr. Speaker, I accept the hon. gentleman's statement. I say, what I have said was this: that the Attorney-General had said in the House, and it has not been denied until now, that his predecessor in the Premiership, the then Attorney-General, desired to have the facts that the West Elgin ballots had disappeared made public. I have said that the present Attorney-General says he did not. I take his statement, and I say that the reason I repeated it was that he said it so that I could not understand it in any other way.

With a Mental Reservation.

Hon. Mr. Gibson—Still that appears to me to be accepting a correction having, not a mental reservation, but with an expressed stipulation that, although accepted, the other version was the right thing. (Ministerial applause and laughter.) Now, I remember the occasion when I dealt with referred to it just as I have been referring to it to-day. The matter was being considered as to whether some reasonable opportunity, some reasonable excuse, could be taken advantage of to give to the public the knowledge of the fact that this had taken place. It was not easy to arrive at a natural occasion for taking that course, and as it had then been practically determined by the Government that there should be a commission—because that determination had been arrived at before Mr. Hardy left office—in view of that fact, it was considered by him, and considered by his colleagues, the better course to allow that to come out as one of the res gestae in connection with the investigation.

Not that Sort of Fighter.

Now, I am going to admit that, perhaps, in some respects, I have not had much to complain of in reference to my hon. friend. At the same time, I am not one of the fighting members of this House—(laughter and applause)—in a certain sense. I do not take part in the debates unless it is incumbent upon me; I would infinitely prefer to listen to my fighting friends around me, and we have plenty of them, and good ones, too. (Ministerial applause.) I am quite free to admit that, so far as the amenities, the personal relations, are concerned, those existing between the hon. gentleman and myself, ever since he has been a member of this House, have been eminently satisfactory, and I would fain that such would continue. But when any hon. gentleman, either in the country or in the House, charges me with disgracing myself in connection with the administration of my department, then I feel that I owe something to myself in the shape of self-defence. (Ministerial applause.) It is not right; it is not fair; it is the reverse of friendly relationship for some hon. gentleman to abuse another, to make charges against him, to find him guilty before he is tried, and then to find fault because a few gentle knocks back are administered. (Ministerial applause.)

Immediate Action Necessary.

However, that is aside from the main question. I feel that the sooner this matter is disposed of the better; the sooner the vote of this House is taken and this matter relegated to the tribunal the better the country will be pleased. (Renewed Ministerial applause.) It is eminently undesirable that there should be, as a preliminary to an investigation, any proceedings in this House; that there should be the continuation of debates similar to the debates on the address from the throne, dishing out the old campaign discussions from either point of view, and indulging in what is the reverse of becoming to the occasion. (Ministerial applause.) What we want is that this matter shall be disposed of, that the report of the Judges shall be received, that the House shall be prepared to deal with it in whatever manner its language may require, and that the business of the country shall be prosecuted in a seemly and becoming manner. (Loud and prolonged Ministerial applause.)

Mr. Sutherland's Statement.

Mr. Donald Sutherland, South Oxford, who rose before the Speaker put the motion, was sure every hon. gentleman and every loyal citizen must regret that such a matter should happen to come up in the House. It was one of the most regrettable things he had heard of during his lifetime, either in Ontario, in the Dominion or in any British country. The public would not be satisfied with anything less than the most searching investigation. They should not be ready to adjourn the House at the present time. It was just possible that other matters of a similar nature might come up in the House—(Opposition applause)—and in that event if the House now adjourned they might again have to adjourn after the report of the commission was submitted. They should dispose of everything of that nature before adjourning, and carry on the affairs of the Province until the people were satisfied. He was convinced that public opinion would not tolerate anything short of being satisfied, whether these charges were true or not, before much business was done. (Ministerial applause.) They should satisfy themselves as to whether there was a good substantial foundation for those charges before they submitted the question to any body and adjourned. They should discuss the matter, not so much from a party standpoint, but from the point of view of the duty they owed to the public. We boasted that we were a superior people, an intelligent, progressive and moral people, but charges had been made in the House for several years past.

Indefinite Insinuation.

"I have myself been placed in a similar position with the gentleman from Manitoulin," said Mr. Sutherland. "In view of the manner in which he is being abused by certain newspapers and certain people of this country I say that until these charges are proven to be true or false we should not condemn him; we should be very chary in passing very harsh remarks about him. For if they

are true he is deserving of the thanks of the people of this country." Mr. Sutherland expressed admiration for the manner in which Mr. Gamey handled his case, and proceeded to refer to certain events which had taken place in South Oxford, and asked the Attorney-General why an investigation had not taken place. Certain papers had said he was not a very good Conservative, but he asserted that he was fully in accord with the policy of the Conservative party, though he reserved the right to vote as he saw best on any measure. He had been branded as a liar because of certain statements he had made. He had been approached in different ways. It had been intimated to him by three men who came to him before the protest was entered that he could make a big thing out of it if he would support the Liberal candidate. He had not encouraged them. Had it only been one man he would not have thought so much of it. But there were at least three, and there were indefinite insinuations in other ways. After the protest was entered he had been told he would be disqualified and advised to put in a disclaimer and run again. He had not entertained such suggestions for a moment. He had his suspicion as to their motive, and knew what the consequence would be if he did such a thing. At the trial some of the most depraved wretches he had ever seen testified against him. Many of them had received money for giving evidence against him. One had received \$25, and an account of \$40 against him was cancelled. Another had received \$15. Another stated that he expected to receive \$100, while another witness had served two years in Kingston.

It being 6 o'clock Mr. Sutherland moved the adjournment of the debate, and the House adjourned.

Sullivan Has Resigned.

Another development of the day was the fact that Frank J. Sullivan, whom Gamey charged as being the go-between in all the transactions with Mr. Stratton, had resigned from his position as clerk in the Public Works Department. Sullivan was appointed a seasonal writer a year ago, and afterwards, owing to the increased work in the Public Works Department, he was given a temporary clerkship. His resignation was handed in Wednesday night, and he merely called at the department yesterday morning.

The Examiner's Reference.

Peterboro', March 12.—(Special.)—The Examiner, Hon. J. R. Stratton's paper, has the following editorial referring to the Gamey affair:—"Yesterday in the Ontario Legislature Mr. R. R. Gamey, the member for Manitoulin, made a statement, or rather a series of statements, which were of a most extraordinary character, and showed the length to which Conservatives will go in order to injure political opponents. Hon. Mr. Gibson and Hon. Mr. Stratton, whose names are used by Mr. Gamey in connection with his charges, both absolutely and positively deny the truthfulness of this assertion so far as it connects these gentlemen with the former's allegations of improper and corrupt actions. In view of the serious character of the charges made, and in compliance with the wishes, or rather the demand, of both Hon. Messrs. Gibson and Stratton, the Government will direct that the most searching investigation possible be made as to the truthfulness of Mr. Gamey's statement. It is highly probable that the inquiry will take the form of a royal commission of Superior Court Judges. No doubt the Opposition politicians and Opposition journals will make much of the Gamey incident, but the public, with a desire to be fair, will do well to suspend judgment pending the investigation into the charges and allegations of Mr. Gamey, which seem to be highly colored, and to bear evidence of being the result of a carefully-concocted plan by those interested for party purposes in discrediting the Government."