

reason why he has not yet been replaced. Yet, I might have hoped that my hon. friend would abstain on this occasion from referring to another gentleman, a highly respected member of this House, who, unfortunately, is not in his seat, from a cause which, we might have hoped, would appeal to the hon. gentleman's sympathy as to the sympathy of every member of this House. My hon. friend, I think, was not well actuated, nor do I think his remarks were at all called for, in directing the attention of the House to the fact that the Minister of Public Works (Mr. James Sutherland) has not been in his place in this House during the present session. The fact is correctly stated, and, perhaps, under different circumstances, no fault could be found with the observations which my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) has made. But I was under the impression that the well known cause of the absence from the House of the Minister of Public Works would warrant everybody in allowing that absence to pass without remark. The hon. gentleman (Mr. James Sutherland) has been absent from this House because of the state of his health. I am reminded that, some six or seven years ago, when another of my colleagues, the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden) having suffered a severe shock in a railway accident, was absent from this parliament for a whole session, not a word was ever uttered upon the subject. Everybody understood the circumstances and hoped that the hon. gentleman would resume his duties as we hope that the hon. Minister of Public Works will, in the near future, be able to resume his place. And that is the reason why the absence of the Minister of Public Works should not be commented upon. My hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) has referred to a rumour that the Minister of Public Works has tendered his resignation to me. I would have preferred not to speak upon this subject. I do not know that the House expects me to speak upon it even after the reference to it made by my hon. friend. Still, I may say that the Minister of Public Works has not placed his resignation in my hands. When he told me that he was in poor health and could not attend to the business of the session, I took it upon myself to say to him, 'My friend, you had better go away and stay away until you are better; we will arrange to carry on the work of your department; and every member of the House will be glad to know that there is hope that you will soon come back again.'

Now, with regard to the resignation of my hon. friend the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), I have only one observation to make in answer to the numerous queries my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) has put to me. So far as I know, and I have no reason to believe to the contrary, the only difference that occurred between

myself and the late Minister of the Interior was that he resigned upon this educational question and for no other reason. I owe it to my hon. friend from Brandon to make this statement openly, widely, and, as I hope, for ever to set at rest any rumours to the contrary.

Now, it is true that my hon. friend has not been replaced yet. How many days have elapsed since he resigned his portfolio? Just thirty-one days. But, before I come to that, let me say that I do not think there is any analogy whatever between the resignation of my hon. friend the late Minister of the Interior and what took place some ten years ago, in 1895. Then we saw a very different spectacle—members coming in and members going out, members resigning one day and taking back their resignation the following day, or the following week, members absent from parliament, not because they were called away a few days for any reason, but members not in their seats because they were neither in nor out of the government, and because they did not appear to know what position they occupied. There is nothing of the kind here, we know where we are, at all events. But when there are disagreements amongst ministers, the honourable course is for the dissenting minister to proffer his resignation, and to say to the Prime Minister: I do not agree with your policy. This is what has taken place; and therefore there is no analogy whatever between what took place in 1895 and what is taking place to-day. It is true, as I say, that the hon. member for Brandon has not been replaced in the cabinet. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition asks, for what cause? Is it any lack of material? Perhaps it may be for an opposite cause, perhaps it is too abundant material. There is such a thing as an *embarras de richesse*, although my hon. friend appears to be suffering from the reverse, he is suffering from penury, while we on this side are suffering from abundance and that may be just as good a reason as the reason suggested by my hon. friend.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Make two ministers then.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not know but that would be a good reason, I will think of it. It might be well to have two ministers instead of one; but I am sure that if I were to ask parliament for an appropriation for another minister my hon. friend would be one of the first to object, he would not allow us to do it. However, we will have to be content with one Minister of the Interior, that is all we are called upon to appoint. I do not think my hon. friend can charge the government with negligence because it has not appointed another minister to a portfolio which has been vacant only thirty-one days. I do not think there has been any negligence whatever, on the contrary I think the government has done right

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.