

Bills that had been introduced, I at once came to the conclusion that I could not decide upon my course while remaining a member of the government, in the enjoyment of office and the emoluments of office. I came to the conclusion that, whatever anybody else might do, my course was perfectly clear: I should, when this question came up, be in a position to speak with a freedom with which a member of the government could not speak, and I should be called upon to decide to what extent and how far I would be prepared to compromise opinions which I had publicly expressed, and opinions which I still hold in order not to destroy the government of the country. That question which comes to every man in public life sooner or later, comes to-day to a good many men in this House of Commons. The question is how far a man is justified in compromising his opinion for the purpose of preventing a political crisis. That is a question which nearly every man in this House has had to decide before; but perhaps no person has had to decide it under quite as remarkable circumstances as the present. For myself, as to the political effect upon myself, I care not for that. I have relieved myself, I think, of the imputation that the course I have taken has been influenced by considerations of office or the considerations of my party remaining in office; and therefore I have to say, having given the subject the best consideration that I am capable of giving it, and having given it that consideration not only from the standpoint of the position of affairs in this parliament but from the standpoint of the position of affairs in the Northwest Territories in time to come, that I can, though not with very much enthusiasm, and with some degree of reluctance, give my support to the Bill.

Mr. W. B. NORTHRUP (East Hastings). Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that when the mountain would not go to Mahomet, Mahomet went to the mountain, and that saying has been illustrated, I will not say in a very pleasing way, this afternoon. I was very much puzzled, while my hon. friend (Mr. Sifton) was speaking, to know just what line I should be compelled to take in what appeared to be a triangular duel. I was afraid to appear even to assent to the opinions of my hon. friend, lest I too might be treated with the same contemptuous indifference that the government according to his own account, had given to him; and I was afraid to appear to differ from him, for I did not know how long it would be before I would find that he and I were in perfect accord. I thought, when the hon. gentleman opened his remarks, that he would perhaps shed a bright light on the subject under discussion, which would enable us to understand how and why this country is being plunged into the excitement which prevails, and why the right hon. gen-

tleman who brought down this Bill brought it down so hastily, so inadvisedly, and apparently with so little preparation. When the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat gave his reasons a short time ago for leaving the government, he told us that he had discussed various things with the Prime Minister. He told us to-day that he had not discussed the educational question; and yet, when he spoke the other day, he was careful to explain that he had not neglected the educational question, but that, to quote his own words:

When it was determined that during this session of parliament legislation should be introduced creating new provinces out of a portion of the Northwest Territories, I felt called upon, in view of the history of the educational question in Canada, to give very serious consideration to the position which I should take with regard to the legislative power to be conferred upon the provinces in regard to the subject of education.

And so, Sir, although the Minister of the Interior, as he was then, was spending his recess in giving calm and I suppose judicial consideration to this important question of education, and although meeting his leader from time to time and discussing the minor features of the Bill, he never thought it worth his while to discuss with his leader, nor did his leader waste his time in discussing with him, this important question of education.

And so, Sir, it is that we find that, although conference followed conference, nothing was said at these conferences on the subject of education, but the Minister of the Interior retiring to the privacy of his own chamber, then apparently gave himself solely and exclusively to rapturous contemplation of this interesting subject of education. Perhaps the reason that the hon. gentleman did not before suggest education to his colleagues was because he had received so little respect and consideration from them in the matters he had consulted with them about, that he did not think it worth his while even to mention this subject. He has told us that although he had made suggestions, being Minister of the Interior and best cognizant of the needs of the Northwest, he could not even persuade his colleagues where they should draw the line between the two territories, perhaps as trifling a proposition as could be considered. They would not even accept his suggestion on such a trifling matter as that, but put the boundary some sixty miles west from where he thought it should be. He thought, too, that the provinces should extend to the north, and no doubt did his best to persuade his colleagues that they should extend to the north, but although he knew the situation ten times as well as his ex-colleagues he was not consulted, he was not made a member of this important sub-committee, and all his suggestions on these points were treated with contemptuous indifference. Then on the important question