Minister of the Interior had returned, and went into, if not open yet secret revolt. Something else came out. It came out that the representatives of the only government which the Territories have—there are three members in that government—based on the agitation of the subject in their country and their legislature, based on a draft Bill which they themselves had drawn, based on a desire and agitation for autonomy—it came out that two of the three, backed and supported by the third member of the government, came down to Ottawa, as the authorized negotiators on behalf of the Territories, to confer with the Dominion government. Was it not to be expected that these properly authenticated representatives of the legislature of the Territories and the people of the Northwest would have been given an opportunity to say something in a matter which meant everything to their people, which meant everything to the country which they governed, and governed under large representative institutions? Was it an unheard of thing or was it too bold a thing to ask that these representatives should have been loyally met and conferred with? Yet what came out? It came out that with reference to the most important clause of the Bill, the only clause which to-day, you may say, is claiming the attention of this House and the country—the representatives of that government were casually informed about it on a Friday and were given an opportunity to confer and discuss just exactly three hours before that Bill with that clause was submitted to parliament. What reason was there that in the case of a territory containing half a million people, with immense interests at stake, represented by its own government, the choice of its own legislature, the legislators in which were the choice of the constituents of that same broad territory—what reason was there that the representatives of these Territories should not have had some kind of determining voice in what was to be their constitution? Was it not to be expected that they should at least have had the courtesy of constant and frequent and loyal and thorough conference? Was there any reason why the First Minister, who in previous times has been always foremost and loud in his assertion of the rights and duties of provinces in these compacts that are made and are merged into a constitution, should have treated them so cavalierly as to have mentioned the subject on a certain Friday, and only within three hours before the Bill was introduced into parliament sent a sub-committee to talk over the matter with these representatives. Two excuses have been made, both by members of the government. The first was made by my hon. friend the Finance Minister (Mr. Fielding). What was it? Oh, said he, Mr. Haultain is only the premier of that province, Mr. Bulyea is a member of his government,

Mr. Bulyea has expressed his satisfaction with these clauses, and Mr. Haultain only represents his own opinion. Did I say a while ago that there used to be such a thing as a fair deference for constitutional methods? That evidently does not exist in the mind of the Finance Minister to-day. That hon. gentleman thinks that when the representatives of a local government are accredited to carry on negotiations with the Dominion government, and when one of these representatives is the First Minister of that local government and the other a member of its cabinet, if the one who is a sub-member, so to speak, signifies his adhesion to the measure, the other who is the First Minister, does not count. It is the tail that swings the body according to the Finance Minister. I wonder why the tail from the Northwest, in the person of the Minister of the Interior, did not swing the Prime Minister? But another member of the government had a still more ingenious excuse. He said that Mr. Haultain was a very estimable gentleman but only a Tory gentleman and it was his duty and purpose to oppose this government. Delightful constitutional doctrine, that is, especially coming from an almost member of the cabinet, the Solicitor General. If Mr. Bulyea has signified—and I do not know that he has—his assent to that clause, it seems to me that the First Minister of the Territories is still left as a man to be accounted with and negotiated with. Is it true or is it not that during the course of those negotiations—if you can call them such—which took place before the 21st February, the First Minister had frequent conferences with Mr. Bulyea when Mr. Haultain was absent, and unknown to Mr. Haultain.

Is it true that the Liberal members from the Northwest collogued with Mr. Bulyea and the Prime Minister unknown to Mr. Haultain and without any invitation to Mr. Haultain to be present? That can be answered; it is either true or not true. But, if it is not answered, and therefore we take it to be true, it is another odd illustration of the strange metamorphosis that has taken place in our constitutional methods. These things are a part of what has occurred. But something more strange and startling and dramatic even than all this has occurred. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) stood in his place in this House and said that he had resigned because clause 16, introduced without his knowledge and without his consent, was in contravention of his principles and of his life-long political record, and consequently he had nothing to do but to resign from the cabinet. And, after three weeks of fightings within and rumours without, of multitudinous midnight parleys and countless journeys by noonday, the Minister of the Interior came down and told us that at last he had been able to put the ring into the nose of the government