

of the Northwest, is he to take the place of the Minister of the Interior? Their opinions were the same, their convictions were the same, one has stood by his convictions and gone out—the other, where oh where is he? It is said that he may go out; well, he may go out. And there is the Minister of Customs, not in his seat of course, but the Minister of Customs has a record on this very question. In what thundering tones in 1892 and 1896 and years inclusive, did he pulverize these Tories who were against provincial rights. Where is he to-day? Is he a friend of the Northwest, or does he believe in the school clause as it is, and has he been one of those who has favoured it and brought it down, and so must stand by it. And the Minister of Militia; his record has been read. The statements he made in 1896 were as strong as ginger; were stronger in fact. Does he too acquiesce? Now, there is the government for you, with all its pretenses stripped, with its professions of 1896 absolutely reversed, flinging to the winds anything smacking of the democratic idea of consulting the people whose interests are at stake. And, like the autocratic Czar of Russia, the Prime Minister rushing his Bill in before his ministers can get together to consult him, declaring the Bill to embody his doctrine and the doctrine on which he is bound to stand. What is the weakness of the Czar of Russia to-day? It is because he does not consult the people; it is worse than that: it is because while not consulting the people he consults only the Grand Dukes. The Prime Minister of Canada is in the same position to-day. The people, are the 500,000, out in the west for whom he legislates. Who are the grand dukes? We know right well whom he has not consulted, but do we know whom he has consulted if there has been any consulting. I am bound to say that if anybody is to be consulted it is the members of this House primarily, and it is essentially the representatives of the people of the great Northwest for whom we are legislating in this matter. When my friend the leader of the opposition put his question and put his case to-day, every man in this House noticed how he was answered. The question was: Why so much haste to get the Bill down two days before two of his most responsible ministers could arrive here, when three weeks have since elapsed without a step in advance? That was a fair honest question. What was the answer the right hon. gentleman gave? Did he himself believe in that answer? Did any man who heard him believe in it? He tried to make it appear that this delay was all due to the fact that my hon. friend from Grey (Mr. Sproule) asked him not to be in too great a hurry to bring on the second reading of the Bill. I ask the right hon. gentleman now: Is that the reason of this delay of three weeks? The right hon. gentleman knew it was not

Mr. FOSTER.

the reason when he stated it, and why then make that answer? If that was simply the reason, why all this travelling to and fro by the ministers for the last three weeks; why these frequent consultations; why this disruption in the cabinet; why the rumour of other ruptures; why this government reduced to utter incapacity for three weeks? Is it all because the member for Grey asked the Prime Minister to postpone the second reading? My right hon. friend may take credit to himself for having dodged the question, but he cannot take credit for having answered it. What reply has the Prime Minister to the question put to him as to whether he thought it right to go on in this matter in the absence of any accredited representative from the Northwest Territories. Has he given any answer? There is none. I call the attention of the Prime Minister to the fact that this is all the worse because there are now two departments of government which are in hypotheec, so to speak; they are not being carried on by men responsible to this House. One is under the nominal headship of my old friend Sir Richard Cartwright, but Sir Richard Cartwright is in another House, and the deputy minister is not physically able to transact the business. That is not a live department, and we only needed to have the exhibition of the Minister of Customs trying to put through its simple estimates to tell us how little anybody else knew about that department. There is the Department of Public Works not under a responsible head. I sympathize as much as any one can with the cause that prevents our friend the minister from being in this House, but the business of this country must go on, and sickness, and death, cannot always be pleaded as an excuse for the public business not going on. It is high time that there should be a responsible minister in this House in charge of the Public Works. I believe it is nominally under my hon. friend from London (Mr. Hyman). Will not the Prime Minister now do a good turn to the hon. member from London, and do a good turn to the public service, by accepting the resignation of the Minister of Public Works at once and giving a chance to my hon. friend (Mr. Hyman) to go back to his old constituency and get the endorsement of his people.

Mr. BENNETT. He may not run there.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. gentleman would run where he ran before.

Mr. BENNETT. Only twenty.

Mr. FOSTER. Only twenty; but this Bill which has been brought down in such a hurry is of such sterling quality and commends itself so strongly to the electorate of the west, that it would be a strong factor in favour of the member of London if the constituency were opened now. My hon. friend (Mr. Hyman) will not be doing