

the Minister of Finance is resting his case upon this magnificent victory in the west, he is putting his faith in a false policy. I would advise him to look to the two constituencies now vacant; let him take a glance at London and North Oxford. I will be pleased to hear that the Minister of Finance has visited either of these constituencies and delivered the same speech he had the hardihood to make in this House. The Minister of Finance in 1896, made a speech on this question that has been read to him in this House; a speech in complete contradiction of the position he has assumed to-day.

He has swallowed that down. He has said: the King's government must go on, and we must have a solid phalanx at our backs regardless of the legislation we put through. Is that any argument? Will the Minister of Finance find that argument go down when he comes to face the electorate of Ontario on this question? I think not. I think he will find that he has gone back on his principles a little too much this time, and that he will get a very cool reception in western Ontario to-day. I have the honour of belonging to a district in which there are two by-elections in sight, and I trust the Minister of Finance will come there and deliver the speech which he delivered in 1896 and the speech which he delivered just now, and let the people compare them and judge how he has stood by the rights of the majority of the people of this country. We hear a great deal about the rights of the minority. Have the majority no rights? Have those rights been maintained or have they been bartered? I maintain that the Minister of Finance and the others who have made speeches of that character have deliberately gone back on the rights of the majority in this country. It is due to them and to this House that the Minister of Justice should give us a fair interpretation of the language contained in these two clauses. We are entitled to it. He said to the hon. member for Lincoln and Niagara (Mr. Lancaster): What did you vote for, or why did you vote for it if you did not understand it? The only safe thing for a man to do is to vote against a thing he does not understand—not to give his vote and find out afterwards what he voted for. That is the position of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. They have given their votes on a question on which I venture to say not one in ten, though it has been debated for six weeks, will dare to raise up and explain the difference between the amended clause and the original clause. If any of them will do that, I shall be glad to give way to them; for it is light that I want on this question. If they cannot do that, what did they vote on or why did they vote? They voted to place on these new provinces a shackle and a yoke which they do not at this moment comprehend the meaning of. Is that the kind of legislation with which the new provinces

are to be started out on the race of life? Is that the attitude of this government? It is time that this country understood exactly the position of these hon. gentlemen. They say the King's government must go on. Let us enjoy the great prosperity of the country, says the Minister of Finance; we cannot enjoy it while we are debating this. And yet, while the Minister of Finance was making that statement, he had in his ears the wails of the cement men, the binder twine men and the woollen men, all of whom had been down here within two or three weeks telling him that these industries were in danger. Instead of giving his mind to the interpretation of these clauses, he says we should allow the King's government to go on, even if it were costing us a few more dollars and we sacrificed principles that we hold most dear. I contend that is unworthy. I submit that it is the duty of the Minister of Justice, as the chief exponent of law in this country to enlighten this House on these two clauses, and to do it forthwith. He cannot do it too soon. He has counted the votes of members of this House on resolutions which they do not comprehend, and which he fails to explain. I say, and I believe it to be true, that when this government appeals to western Ontario, they will get an eye-opener; I believe they will find that though we are not great in numbers on this side of the House, we have a good many of the people of this country at our back. The Minister of Finance lays great unction to his soul that the united following of the government is at his back. That is just where the weakness of his case lies. I have a better opinion of this side of the House than of the other; but I do not believe that all the conscience belongs to this side. If the members on the other side had voted with the same conscientious desire to do their duty as the members on this side of the House have done, not thirteen, but three times thirteen of them, would have voted against the government on this question. Though they join hand in hand—you know the rest, Mr. Chairman; and I tell you that hon. gentlemen opposite will not go unpunished. Their unity on this question will not save them. It has simply aggravated the situation. It informs the people of this country that there are a large number of men in the House of Commons who are prepared to swallow their convictions for the sake of party. The Minister of Finance need not point his fine finger of scorn at the thirteen gentlemen who at the call of their consciences and with the consent of their leader crossed the House, wrenched their party feeling, and voted with the government on this occasion. Where were the consciences of a large majority of the men on the other side? Did their consciences not appeal to them and tell them that they were sacrificing what they knew to be in the best interests of this country and of the new provinces which we are to-day creating?