

ment of such rates as they impose upon themselves with respect thereto.

3. In the appropriation of public moneys by the legislature in aid of education, and in the distribution of any moneys paid to the government of the said province arising from the school fund established by the Dominion Lands Act, there shall be no discrimination between the public schools and the separate schools, and such moneys shall be applied to the support of public and separate schools in equitable shares or proportion.

That is the clause which is contained in the Bill which was introduced by the leader of the government. Between Friday, when I procured a copy of the clause, and Monday morning I gave the subject my best consideration, and I had the privilege in the meantime of having an interview with the Prime Minister on the subject. As the result of such consideration I determined that I could not endorse or support the principle of the educational clauses. Under these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, my duty became perfectly clear, and on Monday morning I wrote to the Prime Minister tendering my resignation as a member of the cabinet. Subsequently, I expressed the desire that my resignation should be acted upon at once and to that wish the Prime Minister has now assented.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, not intending and not considering it proper at this time to enter into a discussion of the merits of the matter which has caused the difference between myself and my leader, I have only to add my regret that circumstances have compelled the severance of my official relations with my leader and with my colleagues with whom my relations have always been of the most harmonious and pleasant character, and with whom upon other questions I am in entire accord. The circumstances, however, in my judgment, make my duty perfectly clear, and it does not seem possible for me to properly consider anything except the principles which are involved.

Hon. GEO. E. FOSTER (North Toronto). Mr. Speaker, I quite agree with the hon. gentleman, the retiring minister (Hon. Mr. Sifton) that this is not the time to undertake the discussion of the principles involved in the Bill. But, with the two statements which have been read and with the reading of the statements and the causes which make the reading of the statements necessary this afternoon, we alone have to deal and with these I shall deal for a moment with your kindly permission. It did not come as a matter of surprise to this side of the House that the Minister of the Interior should at some early period read his letter of resignation, or give his reasons for resigning to this House, nor do I think it came as a matter of surprise to hon. gentlemen who are within the secrets of the party on the other side of the House. We all remember the peculiar circumstances under which this Bill appears to have been

framed and to have been rushed before the House. It did seem an odd and almost unexplainable thing that a Bill of such importance should be framed in the absence of two of the most responsible ministers in the House as regards the country and the scope of territory in which that Bill was to be operative, and having respect to the declaration of policy which I think a year or two ago was made in this House when, with some new idea of a division of ministerial responsibility, it was announced that certain ministers were to be held more or less accountable for the particular provinces or sections from which they came. This was exemplified in the case of the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) in his intermeddling with the militia matters of this country. During the last few weeks this important Bill has been framed and has been laid before the House in the absence of the hon. Minister of the Interior, who was especially charged with the supervision of and the responsibility for the Northwest Territories and the west generally. We were led to think that possibly the second chapter of what took place on an almost similar line a year or two ago was being prepared for the House and the country. It is well known that at that time a most important railway Bill was conceived and formed and was almost, if not quite, presented to this House behind the back of the responsible Minister of Railways and Canals, whose office it should have been to have aided in the consideration and preparation of that Bill. We were of late led still more to suppose this from a remark which fell casually, but rather acridly, from the lips of the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) himself, who, when, not long ago, asked about the time when we might expect the introduction of the Bill, gave as his answer that it would probably be introduced at a certain time, and when some inquiring mind of the many inquiring minds on this side of the House put the question to the right hon. Prime Minister as to whether the hon. the Minister of the Interior would be back by that time, the right hon. Prime Minister, as I say, rather sharply retorted that he did not know whether he would or not, but that he, the Prime Minister, would be here. Taking all this with the history of this Bill into consideration it did not come as a surprise to this part of the House, and I doubt very much if it fell as much of a surprise upon hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. But, it is a still stranger thing that the hon. Minister of the Interior, a most important member of the cabinet at any time and a specially important member of the cabinet as regards the conception and arrangement of this Bill, did not actually know, although it is supposed that telegraph wires stretch from here to almost all parts of the United States of America in some particular portion of which the hon.