

stand the politics of our country, from people who have been long enough here to become acquainted with public questions. One reason why we did not go to Edmonton can be found in the remarks addressed to this House a few years ago by the present Minister of the Interior himself. It has been said that we did not contest Edmonton because there was a certain number of Catholic voters in that constituency. That is not the case. One of the reasons why we did not go, is the reason assigned by the present Minister of the Interior, that his constituency is largely populated by a class of people who are not acquainted with British institutions, who do not understand our laws, and who would not understand the schools question or the land question. Now, what did that hon. gentleman state in regard to this very question two or three years ago? I will read his remarks:

I am not in a position to speak of the Doukhobors from an intimate personal knowledge, as none of them are resident in the constituency I represent, but on the Galician question I claim to be an authority, because I believe that fully half of the whole Galician population of Manitoba and the Northwest is located in the district I represent. I understand that there are some 12,000 or 14,000 in one colony. Already one local electoral district is in all probably in the hands of the Galician vote, if these people are qualified to vote.

That is one reason why we did not go to the constituency of Edmonton. He speaks as follows in another place:

I am here to say to-night that I believe the present conditions of the country would be better, our prosperity would be greater, we would have a still larger number of good settlers, if we did not have that class of immigration at all.

That is the kind of men that he wished to lay this question before for their endorsement.

Another idea that is conveyed is that all foreign peoples are the same, that because the German people are foreigners and because they are desirable settlers, therefore the Galicians being foreigners and the Doukhobors being foreigners, are also desirable settlers. Do my hon. friends know that they could not insult a German and Scandinavian as much in any other way as to compare him with a Doukhobor or a Galician? The pride of race is as strong in these people as it is in us, and they object, and object very strongly, to being placed in the same category as a Slavic people, a people who less than two generations ago were serfs of the soil, and who unfortunately have not had the opportunities, even if they had the capability, to rise very high above that position to-day. Make no mistake, there is no comparison between the German who comes from Galicia and a Galician who comes from Galicia, and no man will resent such a comparison more than the German himself. But the Galician or the Doukhobor who have been reared under circumstances which did not permit them to know what free government is, who know nothing of government except that government is a tyranny, these people, let them be ever so good,

Mr. W. J. ROCHE.

cannot be citizens as we would wish them to be citizens, or as our Scandinavian and German fellow citizens are.

These are the expressions of the present Minister of the Interior. I do not think he has changed his views, at any rate he has never repudiated these words so far as I know. I could quote various other expressions to the same effect:

Let me say one word to the government, and it will be a word of advice. I speak here to-night on behalf of the most populous district of the west; and I have reason to believe that I speak the sentiments of the majority of the people between Lake Superior and the Rocky mountains on this immigration question. There is no question that the people of the west feel more strongly on than the immigration question, and there is nothing that they more earnestly resent than the idea of settling up the country with people who will be a drag on our civilization and progress. We did not go out to that country simply to produce wheat. We went to build up a nation, a civilization, a social system that we could enjoy, be proud of and transmit to our children, and we resent the idea of having the millstone of this Slav population hung around our necks in our efforts to build up, beautify and improve that country, and so improve the whole of Canada.

There the member for West Assiniboia has one reason why the Conservative opposition did not see fit to challenge an expression of opinion from these people, who are depicted by the Minister of the Interior as illiterate, ignorant of British institutions and of our laws and politics. Now, there has been something, I think, kept back by this government, some reason why they did not wish to hand over these lands to the provinces, something beneath the surface. I think it has been touched upon by some hon. gentlemen in some of their speeches, and I think I pointed it out myself when speaking on the second reading. But any person who lives in the west knows whereof I speak when I say that one reason why the government are retaining those lands in their possession is that they desire to have the wonderful leverage which they will have at election time by holding all these lands in their own hands. Every homestead inspector, you might say, is an active political partisan, an election agent during the course of a campaign. Yes from one end of the year to the other. I do not have, to go outside my own constituency to find examples of what occurred during the last campaign. One homestead inspector in my riding openly appeared at the polls in that contest, stood there in company with a mounted policeman with his side arms on, and in company with an interpreter from the Yorkton land office—the three of them—and the electors had to run the gauntlet of the three of them before coming in, each one bringing pressure to bear upon them, threatening them with retaining their homestead patents if they voted for your humble servant.

These people were simply intimidated, they went in and shouted out how they