

and bring it to its knees. He had lassoed a wild steer of the prairies and brought it up to the ring-bolt. Now, a strange, a luminous, in some respects a lurid, light is thrown upon this whole transaction by this speech of the Minister of the Interior.

An hon. MEMBER. Ex-minister.

Mr. FOSTER. He was minister before he resigned.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. And he may be minister now.

Mr. FOSTER. We do not know. This may be the last day he will be out. What did the Minister of the Interior say? He stated that he had dissented from clause 16 because he was opposed to the principle of it. And what did the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) say the other day? He said that the moment he read that clause, he went to the Prime Minister and discussed the matter with him and laid before him his objections to it. Did the Prime Minister meet him in any way? We only know that the result of that conference was that Mr. Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, resigned because he could not accept clause 16. And, now, a strange thing happens, and one most difficult to reconcile with all that has gone before. The Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) himself, in his place in parliament, declared: I never intended that in that legislation any more should be granted than is at present enjoyed under the ordinances of the Northwest. And the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) from his place in this House declared that it was never the intention of the government that anything more should be put into the constitution of the new provinces than absolutely what was enjoyed under the ordinances I have spoken of. Now, it is to be presumed—at least, it ought to be presumable—that when the Minister of the Interior, an intelligent man, went to the Prime Minister, another intelligent man and, as we suppose, told him that because of his reading of clause 16 he was obliged to dissent and leave the cabinet, it ought to be presumable in that case that the other intelligent man the Prime Minister must have said to him: Mr. Sifton, I never meant what you read in that clause; all that I meant, or mean to-day, is that the Northwest shall enjoy, as to separate schools, only the privileges that it has at the present time. Did that conversation take place? The moment it did, Mr. Sifton, and the Prime Minister were at one, and there was no cause for resignation. Did that conversation not take place, at least so far as the Prime Minister is concerned? Then, if the Prime Minister's statement, made in this House, is correct and he never intended anything but what is in the present ordinances, it was clearly his duty to

state that fact to his Minister of the Interior and so make the resignation of that minister unnecessary. But the Prime Minister does not appear, so far as the records show, to have done either the one thing or the other—or else there is a mystery, a most mysterious mystery, as to why the Minister of the Interior resigned. Was it on the cards that he should resign anyway? And was this misunderstanding allowed to continue in order to give him a chance to resign? For, what happens at the end of three weeks time? The clause is brought down exactly to the liking of the Minister of the Interior. If the Prime Minister did not wish to get rid of his Minister of the Interior, why did not he agree with him in the way and before the breaking out took place. Can there be any explanation of that mystery? I leave it to hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House.

But, Sir, something else happens. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), the other day, gave us the reason why it was impossible for him to agree to clause 16. I am not going to make a scrap-book of myself in these remarks, because it is not pleasant to the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) to hear scrap-book quotations. But let me give, in effect, the reason why the Minister of the Interior could not assent to clause 16, as that reason was given by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) himself. He said, in the first place, that the Prime Minister had been very ill-advised to bring down that clause without giving him a chance to impart his knowledge and opinions concerning it. It turns out that that was correct on the part of the Minister of the Interior anyway. But the reason why the Minister of the Interior could not swallow clause 16 was this—that in the verbiage, compact, well thought out, put together by the hand of a master, there was something concealed. Not altogether concealed from himself, the Minister of the Interior said—he knew too much for that. But what was concealed in that verbiage? There was an irrevocable constitutional ear-mark upon the public funds devouring them for ever to a separate school minority in those Territories, an ear-mark which made one of the greatest endowments in the whole history of the world for sectarian institutions and sectarian purposes, in the fifty million dollars' worth of Northwest lands. That is why the Minister of the Interior could not swallow clause 16. Now, it would be a pity if we could not take the Minister of the Interior at his own valuation.

But we have endorsements, for when the Minister of the Interior stated that in no unequivocal language, in face of his former leader, his former leader assented by utter silence, the Minister of Justice assented by utter silence, and the Postmaster General applauded to the echo, as did also the Minister of Customs and the Minister of Fin-