

Minister of the Interior has been for the past number of weeks, of the educational clauses of this Bill until after he had returned to this city and to this House when he obtained a copy of the clause. One would have thought that on the general theory of responsible government, of a cabinet acting unitedly, of a cabinet acting wisely, consulting with every unit of the cabinet, as, I think it is in duty bound to do, in order to secure the united wisdom of the whole of the cabinet, that the hon. Minister of the Interior would have been consulted with, not even by telegraph or letter does it seem that the hon. Minister of the Interior was apprised of the one prominent clause in the Bill in which it would be supposed naturally that he would be very much interested.

The excuse, the reason, is given to-day—and we are bound to take the reason in a parliamentary sense—that the hon. gentleman is retiring because he could not find it consistent with his principles to accede to that particular clause in the Autonomy Bill, but from what I have stated and from what we have seen, it would be easily inferred, I think, by any member of this House that there is a reasonable doubt as to whether or not that was the cause of the resignation, as to whether the deliberate actions of the Prime Minister and the rest of the Cabinet heretofore have not made it quite abundantly apparent that it was the intention to get rid of the hon. gentleman whether he got out on this particular clause of the Bill or on some other. The Prime Minister has not quite satisfied the curiosity of the House. Outside of the information which was conveyed to us by the bulletin boards there are other rumours which are abroad in the corridors of this House, abroad on the streets of the city and, I dare say, are tingling the wires, which stretch from Ottawa to different parts of this country even now while we are speaking. And why? It is stated that another important minister, another important member of the cabinet of the right hon. gentleman, is deliberating as to whether he shall not follow in the tracks—no, I would not put it that way—but follow, at least, the example of the hon. the Minister of the Interior who has retired, in also expressing his formal and unqualified dissent from this Bill. There might be some reasons which would impose on us the idea that there is truth in that. I could hardly reconcile to my own mind the idea of a Prime Minister and a cabinet undertaking to frame and to put before the country so important a Bill as this, involving no trivial and unimportant financial burdens, but involving very onerous and continuous and growing financial burdens upon this country, I cannot, I say, understand how a Bill of that kind could be conceived, put into form and introduced into this House in the absence of the Minister of Finance, who is responsible, if any man in the cabinet is responsible, for the

Mr. FOSTER.

financial interests of this country. Was he also altogether and entirely in the dark with reference to this Bill? Did he know the clauses, financial or otherwise, before he came back to Ottawa and ascertained what they were by asking for a copy of the Bill? Was there such an urgent necessity for the introduction of the Bill that a delay of at least two or three days could not have been given until both the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Finance should have had opportunity to meet their colleagues in Council and by word of mouth and interchange of ideas, see if an amicable and united conclusion could not be had? Now, we would be very loath to lose the Minister of Finance.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. FOSTER. His pleasant countenance is always an inspiration to us—when it is not the opposite, and it is not often it is the opposite. But we would like to have this set at rest and to hear the Prime Minister state whether there is any truth in the rumour which is persistent that the Minister of Finance, not having been consulted, is not altogether at one with the rest of the cabinet in relation to this Bill. We must bid adieu to the Minister of the Interior with varying feelings. We do it some with sympathy; some will say he has fought the fight and finished the course—I am not going to say how good a course it was—and he has entered into his reward. Probably he has had his reward before; possibly, like the late Minister of Railways and Canals, there is some glorious future awaiting him in some of the large official charges of this country. Anyway, if he leaves us as Minister of the Interior, he has not stated that he is going to leave us as member and we will still have him with us to remonstrate with and to counsel and as far as we can abiding in good will and friendship.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN (South York). Mr. Speaker, partly as a question of privilege I desire to refer now to the question before the House, and I would ask the right hon. gentleman, who lives in the ramshackle house now, and who is the Samson who has pushed down the pillars and has the roof upon him and his co-ministers in the government? The other day the right hon. gentleman said I was quixotic. Well, there is this at least to be said about Don Quixote, that he was a country gentleman, a man of high honour and that he died with good Christian burial. If I must search for a historical reference to the hon. gentleman after what has happened here to-day, I could think of no one else than one of these autocratic Russian grand dukes of whom we hear at the present time. He has confessed here and the late Minister of the Interior has confessed here that in this House on Monday of this week when I asked where was the Minister of the Interior and the right hon. gentleman said it was for me to have him here, that he