

In conclusion, let me observe that if the government is determined to disregard the legal rights of Alberta and Saskatchewan as provinces, and to set aside the doctrine of provincial rights and to cause these provinces to be branded at their birth as inferior to their sisters in confederation, the consequences will be more serious than years can either cure or cause to be forgotten. If we consider the conduct of the Northwest members supporting the government, and the history of their dealings with the measures now before the House, in the light of the vast mass of patronage dangled before their eyes, we are irresistibly forced to the conclusion that their course, including that of their former leader, the member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) and that of the present Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver), savours altogether too strongly of what may be termed practical politics. If we consider also the conduct of the right hon. the First Minister in introducing these Bills at this the first session of a new parliament, immediately following a general election, at which the subject of autonomy was not even mooted—the people of this country or even those of the Northwest being accorded no opportunity whatever of speaking upon these subjects—and if we regard the general tenor of this debate and the revelations of the past few days in connection with it, I think we are also forced to the conclusion that the conduct of the right hon. gentleman savours altogether too much of distrust of the people, and fear of the people, leading inevitably, in my opinion, to dark and devious electoral methods in the future, and to the conviction that the right hon. gentleman is actuated further by deception of the people in the course he has taken. I might warn the right hon. gentleman that it was just such failure to trust the people, such electoral methods long practiced, and such deft deception of the people, which eventually brought about the disastrous downfall of the Ross administration in Ontario.

Mr. A. M. BEAUPARLANT (St. Hyacinthe). (Translation). Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Prince Edward (Mr. Alcorn), who has just resumed his seat, has in a general way approved of the stand taken by his chief (Mr. Borden). If I understood him right, he is of opinion that the legislation now submitted to the House does not come within the purview of this parliament and should be left to the legislatures of the provinces about to be organized. As I am speaking in a tongue which is not that of the members who oppose this legislation, I shall be content with answering objections in a general way, without referring to any one in particular, awaiting in the near future some more favourable opportunity which may present itself to me of addressing the House in English, the tongue generally spoken here, and which hon. members more readily under-

stand. In rising to express my views on this question, while not over-confident, I am not dispelled by any great feeling of fear. I am not over-confident inasmuch as I do not flatter myself to the point of thinking that I shall throw new light on the subject. Numerous and learned speeches which we have heard since the opening of this debate have supplied all the light which the matter called for. On the other hand, I am not fretful, for, should I somewhat mix up matters, I might be excused on the ground that some of those who preceded me have been doing the very same thing. So, then, it is not so much with the idea of throwing new light on the subject, but rather impelled by a sense of duty that I am undertaking to explain at this stage of the debate the vote which I shall be called upon to give on this occasion.

The question submitted to the House has been discussed from the constitutional and legal standpoint; it has also been discussed from the standpoint of equity and public interest, concerning all of which people are apt to differ greatly in their views. The matter has been discussed with more or less fairness and breadth of mind, according, of course, to the mental and moral quality of the various speakers make-up. I propose dealing with the question in a rather theoretical way and from a few standpoints only which possibly, for the most part, have already been touched upon, and which, consequently, I do not claim to have discovered. I shall omit discussing for the time being some enactments, disappointed as I am at having heard them construed in directly opposite sense with apparently the same sincerity on both sides. I must say that if there had not been enacted legislation providing for the establishment or maintenance of separate schools in a country inhabited by about equal numbers of people belonging to two distinct nationalities, we should pass such a law. Even if the minorities were not, under the constitution, entitled to schools of their own liking—a statement with which I do not by any means agree—I say we should grant them that right, not only without hesitation, but even with cheerfulness, through a spirit of fairness, of justice (let us say generosity, for those who scorn the word justice), or at any rate with a view to ensuring peace in this country.

I have followed the discussion of estimates relative to public works. I noticed with pleasure—and I take this opportunity of acknowledging the spirit of fairness exhibited on such occasions—that whatever the locality where improvements were to be carried out the items were discussed solely on their merits, from the point of view of utility, and without considering the special community who would profit more directly through the work. As it was merely a question of money, it was in every case settled without any display of prejudice, excitement or commotion. In this case the inter-

Mr. ALCORN.