

that while most of them responded to the crack of the party lash, I am glad to be able to note that I see opposite me a gentleman who did not so respond, and I congratulate the Minister of the Interior who did not on that occasion respond to the crack of the party lash. The Minister of the Interior is to-day in this cabinet, he was acclaimed with great gusto, and he sits in this cabinet to-night as a geographical and a national freak. He sits there by reason of the fact that there must needs be a cabinet representative from the provinces, west of Lake Superior. The hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) went through the lobbies day after day, read the public prints day after day, and read with the greatest relish that he was to be made a cabinet minister, and received the congratulations of his friends. We remember when that hon. gentleman spoke in the House, and after he had spoken, how warmly he was congratulated as the next Minister of the Interior. But unfortunately he was not nationally well placed, there were not enough Galicians, Roumanians, Russians and hundreds of other what-nots in his constituency, and so perforce my hon. friend from Edmonton had to be chosen. The hon. gentleman himself disclaimed that the school question was a burning question in his re-election as minister. I see in the public press that he has announced that to be the case, and everybody knows to-day that the great question in the riding of Edmonton was whether or not Calgary should be the seat of government, or whether it should be his own town of Edmonton. That question, fortified by the fact that two-thirds of the population were foreigners who cared little about public schools, and, I suppose, much less about separate schools, explains how it is that the hon. gentleman to-night has dropped into the office of a cabinet minister. But I hope and expect that those kicking proclivities he has evinced in the past—if he will allow me to say so—which have signalized him on different occasions when he made strong protests against the action of this government, will, even before this vote is taken, once again assert themselves, and that he will come out even at the last moment as an opponent of this Bill.

Now, Sir, what was the action of the government in reference to the introduction of this Bill? Here was a Bill fraught with the greatest moment to the western Territories, and where was the Minister of the Interior, the minister who is specially charged with conducting the affairs of that great western country? The Minister of the Interior was absent from the city, the reason assigned was that of ill health. He was absent, he was not here to defend the sacred principles for which he was always ready to lay down his life a few years ago in the province of Manitoba, provided al-

ways that the salary of a cabinet minister went with it. It was a patent fact that he was coming back speedily, but this government could not delay the introduction of the Bill until he returned, and so forsooth it was forced in before that hon. gentleman could even place his foot in the House. But worse than that. A special committee of this cabinet was formed to engineer the progress of this Bill, and the composition of that committee is a marvel to all men who will look at it. First and foremost was the Prime Minister, who had a place on it as was to be expected by virtue of his position. I do not presume any claim will be made for the premier as being in the past a constitutional lawyer, or even at the present time. But he was expected, by virtue of his position in his government, to be accorded a place on that very select and supreme committee. Next to him came, of necessity, and probably by reason of his legal attainments as well as of his office, the Minister of Justice, and I am sure nobody will complain on that score. But in the name of all that is good in this country of representative institutions, where the House of Commons is supposed to be amenable to the people, they had to go over to the charnel house for decayed politicians, as it has been described by hon. gentlemen opposite in years gone by, and from its long hidden recesses was drawn forth the Secretary of State, a gentleman eighty years of age. The fact goes without saying that the views of Senator Scott, the Secretary of State, on this question were well known. Then my own province of Ontario was granted a seat on that committee in the person of a gentleman who is prepared to distinguish men in this House on two great lines, either as statesmen or as lawyers—I refer to the Postmaster General. That hon. gentleman did not arrogate to himself that he was a lawyer, but he does arrogate to himself that he is a statesman.

Now, Sir, I fancy I see the meeting of that committee. The hon. Minister of Justice told us in reply to my hon. friend from Halton (Mr. Henderson) the other night that he prepared the Bill, word for word and line for line, and that he was responsible for every portion of it. I accept that. I believe that statement is true, and I fancy I see these four gentlemen drawn up together, the Minister of Justice laying down the Bill and saying: There is the Bill; and the Postmaster General saying: So mote it be. The hon. Postmaster General is never known to object, and it would not be expected that he would object to this Bill. Why was not the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) included in that committee? The Bill was introduced before he could reach the city, and the government hoped that after the committee had made their finding and after they had brought down their Bill, the right hon. Prime Minister's speech would