

future, as these shall develop, be it therefore resolved, that this meeting emphatically protests against the enactment of section 16 of the present Autonomy Bills, or any other provisions inconsistent with their constitutional freedom in this regard. Be it further resolved, that, since the electors have had no opportunity to pass upon the principle embodied in the school clauses of the Bills now before parliament, the government should: (a) abandon the clause; or (b) appeal to the country on the measure; or defer action entirely until after the next general election. And be it ordered that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the hon. the Prime Minister and to the city members of the House.

That resolution is a very moderate one and a very wise one, and either of the three courses it recommends should have appealed to the common sense of the cabinet. The general elections, Sir, took place a few weeks before the meeting of this House. These Bills had no doubt been fully decided upon, at any rate in their general lines, before that election; and that being the case, surely their provisions should have been submitted to the people. It constitutes a gross deception upon the electors, especially the electors of the Northwest, that such measures should have practically been decided upon, and not one reference made to them by any one on behalf of the government during the last general elections. In my opinion this conduct of the government is deserving of the severest censure. As my right hon. friend is aware, that meeting at Massey Hall was attended by an enormous number of his followers—men who had been his steady followers for years—and I believe I am quite within the mark in saying that the Prime Minister has received more strong remonstrances from his own supporters in Ontario than from all the rest of the country put together. The right hon. gentleman made his appeal standing upon the constitution of the country. In that respect he was right because if the constitution is good for anything it surely ought to be capable of meeting such a case as the present. But the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) threw to the winds the constitution. He said the question was not a constitutional one, but one of expediency. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick), I understand, believes that the substituted clause is practically the same as the clause in the original Bill. If that be the case, what power has been brought to bear upon the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) to induce him to swallow that amended clause as almost sufficient for the needs of the people of the west and as not placing upon them any more onerous restrictions than the law now in force in the Territories does? The 'Globe' the other day took the view of the Minister of the Interior with regard to the original educational clause and held that it was the duty of the Liberals to reject it, who believed in provincial rights and provincial

• Mr. OSLER.

freedom. How could it be supposed that the law officers who drafted the Bills and those who advised the Prime Minister to present them to parliament could have imagined that legislation so inconsistent with the First Minister's expressed purpose and so regardless of his past Canadian liberalism would be accepted by the Liberals in the country and would not instead have called forth their indignation and surprise? The ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) paid the Minister of Justice the compliment of saying that he certainly could not have drafted those clauses, if they were supposed to mean what the First Minister said he intended them to mean, and an attempt was made to put the onus on the draughtsman. I am quite sure that the Minister of Justice will not shirk responsibility in any such manner. Those clauses were drawn deliberately, they were drawn knowingly, they were drawn in the shape they were, although it was known that they would not be accepted by the great bulk of the people. They were concealed from those who, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice knew, would oppose them tooth and nail. They were only presented to Mr. Haultain the day they were submitted to this House and to the Minister of the Interior and Finance not more than a day or two before they were introduced here. They were deliberately suppressed and kept back from all those who as the Prime Minister and other members of the government well knew, would strongly and strenuously oppose them. What the people want to know is why were these clauses forced on an unwilling cabinet? Why were they forced upon people who objected to them? Why were they forced upon the very people who are most interested in this Bill? These people were not consulted. The man who represented them in the cabinet was not consulted, and yet apparently such force was brought to bear upon the government that they were inserted in the Bill and kept secret until the very last moment. Surely that is not the way to bring about conciliation, but it is rather the way to arouse the worst feelings on both sides. There must have been some strong power that forced the government to take this position and what the people want to know is who is that power, who pulled the strings? When the clause was first read and created such excitement throughout the country, if it was so innocent as the Prime Minister said it was intended to be, why did nearly five weeks elapse before it was re-drafted and again submitted to this House? During that interval we had the resignation of one of the ministers; we had bickerings among hon. gentlemen opposite, and the country was aflame with excitement. There was more than a simply re-drafting of that clause to cause all that delay. The cause of that wrangling, what-