

Is it fair to the representatives of that country in this House to force this measure through without the people of the Northwest, by their responsible minister, having a voice in the consideration of the measure? I think not, Sir, and I think it is unfair to that country that it should have no responsible minister here while this discussion is going on, and while this measure is being passed through the House.

But, Sir, there is another phase of the question. When the ex-Minister of the Interior appeared here, apparently to the confusion of the First Minister, two days after he had introduced this Bill, what took place? The resignation of the Minister of the Interior. Why? As a protest against the action of the First Minister in introducing the Autonomy Bills in his absence, and particularly against the educational clauses thereof, which the ex-Minister of the Interior could not endorse, and he vacated his seat as a protest against the action of the First Minister and of his government. That was a challenge thrown down to the First Minister and to his government upon their policy with respect to these Bills. There is a vacancy in the government now, the government is without a Minister of the Interior. Let the First Minister test the feeling of the people of the Northwest upon this question by selecting from his plethora of ability that he has behind him a gentleman to fill the position of Minister of the Interior, and let him send that gentleman back for re-election in order to test the feelings of the people of the Northwest with respect to his policy. That would be the manly way, that would be the bold way, that would be the proper way on the part of men who are willing to trust the people. Is this government willing to trust the people in connection with these Bills?

Mr. SPROULE. No.

Mr. STOCKTON. The conduct of the government apparently shows that they are not willing to trust the people. I say, don't gag the people of the Northwest, give them an opportunity to say whether they want this legislation or not, give them an opportunity to say in a constitutional way whether they are in harmony with the government with respect to this measure. The right hon. gentleman has an opportunity of doing that. If he and his government do not do it, they show that they do not trust the people; although the right hon. gentleman is reported to have said that he was a democrat to the hilt. Now, Sir, I should say no more on this question. I felt that I could not remain silent while a question of this importance was before the House. I repeat that the conduct of the government in keeping this seat vacant is not fair to the people of the Northwest, it is not fair to the people of the rest of Canada, and, furthermore, it is contrary to the constitu-

tional usages which obtain in the mother country and all the great self-governing colonies of the empire.

Mr. H. LENNOX (South Simcoe). I did not intend to speak on this question until the main question came again before the House. But I do feel that this is a time for hon. members of the House to speak out, and say distinctly what they think of the conduct of the government. I had hoped, there being seven representatives in this House from the Northwest supporting the government, that they at all events would defend the interests of their own section in this matter. When I find that the First Minister has been able so far to influence and to control those hon. members, I think it necessary that the rest of us should speak out definitely on this subject. Now the First Minister has been perfectly consistent, and with my great respect for the First Minister, I shall take the liberty of addressing a few plain words to him in the English language which I hope he will fairly understand. I hope that the people of this country will become seized of the situation, and although it is vain to hope that the government will listen to the voice of reason on this subject, there is one power in this country great enough to arrest the action of the government, and that is the press. I hope that they will take this matter up and agitate from end to end of Canada before this measure goes through, in order that we may guarantee the interests of the great west in this House. I say that the First Minister to-day has been consistent in his attitude throughout this whole matter, not only in this matter, but during the last two sessions, in treating lightly subjects of great importance and in treating the representatives of the people with levity by neglecting their just demands. The First Minister must apprehend that he has not on any occasion when the leader of the opposition, either to-day or previously, asked for information which this House has a right to obtain, given a fair, square and honest answer to a question.

Now the First Minister says, we know where we are. Well, perhaps they do. It is rather recent information, for they did not know where they were two or three weeks ago. A portion of their followers were in rebellion two or three weeks ago, but the party lash has been applied. They know where they are to-day but they do not know where they will be to-morrow. They do not know where they will be a week hence and I warrant there are some hon. gentlemen opposite who do not know yet quite what is going to develop during the course of this discussion, and who do not know where they will be a week hence. Probably the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) thinks he knows where he is. The hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) probably thinks he knows where he is

Mr. STOCKTON.