

He does it he says to save the government; to save a crisis. He thought a crisis would be on the country. Why, Sir, if when he and his followers went out as a protest against clause 16 in the first Bill, he and his followers had remained out, I will undertake to say that there would be no clause 16 in the first Bill and no clause 16 in the second Bill either. He had the cards in his own hand. He was in command of a sufficient number of votes in this House to determine that that Bill should not go through. And do you suppose for one moment that the right hon. First Minister would bring a crisis upon this country, would surrender the seals of office, for the sake of giving a limited autonomy Bill to the Northwest? Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not my opinion. I think that the crisis would have been got over in other ways; the Bill would have been withdrawn, and, possibly, after mature consideration when hon. gentlemen came to think seriously of what they were doing, another measure would have been framed which would have met the approval not only of the other side of the House, but of this, and there would have been no danger of a crisis. Now, here is what the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) said in the same speech. It was the farewell to the House, on this measure—because the words I am about to read embody the closing remarks of that hon. gentleman:

I may say, Mr. Speaker, that I have found a very great deal of difficulty in deciding upon my course in this question.

We all realize how perplexed the hon. gentleman was. In fact, I may say, I felt sorry for him; I feel sorry for him now. Here was a man having convictions, having profound convictions, well grounded convictions, the champion of provincial rights in the Northwest, the champion of public schools in Manitoba, and, for the sake of keeping a government in power, he must abandon his principles, he must forget his convictions and support a measure of which he himself declares he does not approve.

When I saw the Bills that had been introduced, I at once came to the conclusion that I could not decide upon my course while remaining a member of the government, in the enjoyment of office and the emoluments of office. I came to the conclusion that, whatever anybody else might do, my course was perfectly clear: I should, when this question came up, be in a position to speak with a freedom with which a member of the government could not speak, and I should be called upon to decide to what extent and how far I would be prepared to compromise opinions which I had publicly expressed, and opinions which I still hold, in order not to destroy the government of which I have been a member. That question which comes to every man in public life sooner or later, comes to-day to a good many men in this House of Commons.

The hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) had been in caucus with his colleagues in the

House of Commons. He knew their sentiments, he knew that they like himself had convictions in this matter. He knew they did not approve of fastening on these new provinces a dual system of schools for all time to come. But I think it was hardly fair to parade before the House and the country the fact that there were a good many members of the House who were preparing to compromise themselves as he had done.

The question is how far a man is justified in compromising his opinion for the purpose of preventing a political crisis.

I have never yet had to decide that question. I do not believe that it is necessary for a man to compromise himself at all. If a man does compromise himself, if he realizes that he is obliged to compromise himself, his duty is to go home, lay his case before his constituents, surrender the trust that has been given him, if he cannot support a measure and is not in harmony with his constituents. I say: Shame on the man who compromises his convictions on a question such as the education of the people of this country!

That is a question which nearly every man in this House has had to decide before; but perhaps no person has had to decide it under quite as remarkable circumstances as the present. For myself, as to the political effect, I care not that. I have relieved myself, I think, of the imputation that the course I have taken has been influenced by considerations of office or the considerations of my party remaining in office; and therefore I have to say, having given the subject the best consideration that I am capable of giving it, and having given it that consideration not only from the standpoint of the position of the affairs in this parliament but from the standpoint of the position of affairs in the Northwest Territories in time to come, that I can, though not with very much enthusiasm, and with some degree of reluctance give my support to the Bill.

What a confession for an hon. member who has occupied the position of minister of the crown in this great Dominion—voting contrary to his convictions, voting in the full light of day, knowing what he is doing, knowing that he is not in harmony with his constituents who sent him here, knowing that he is betraying the trust that is placed in him, knowing that he has no right really to give the vote he is giving—yet for the sake of political expediency giving that vote for a Bill, special clauses of which he does not approve and cannot bring himself to support with any degree of enthusiasm.

Now, we have noticed the difference between these two clauses, and we have noticed how extremely small a thing enables gentlemen on the other side to find a way of escape from voting against the government—not a matter of principle, but simply a matter of words, two clauses which differ only in words and not in principle or in substance. Now, how came it that such a clause was ever introduced? Whence did