

gentlemen opposite are creating a situation from which it will not be easy to escape. We have been told by hon. gentlemen opposite that the proposition which is now being proposed to this House is one that is for the benefit of all the parties concerned, that it is for the peace, order and good government of those provinces that are being constituted. So far as I am able to judge, the restrictions, light though they may seem, and narrow though they may appear to be, as hon. gentlemen view them, I believe that they are in the wrong direction with regard to these provinces, I believe that we have not the power to place these restrictions upon those provinces; and even if we have the power to impose these restrictions, I doubt very much if we have the ability to enforce them should these provinces say that they are not going to carry them into effect. What could the hon. gentlemen opposite do to enforce the clauses provided in the Bill if the Northwest Territories say they are not going to enforce them? I know nothing short of force of arms that would compel these Territories to enforce these clauses, provided they did not see their way to do it. In viewing the British North America Act and its amendments, I cannot for the life of me see how hon. gentlemen can contend that even if they succeed in putting these clauses in the Bill they can enforce them upon the provinces. Whether there is some light on this subject that has not yet been given to us, I am not in a position to judge, but I must say that the attitude of the cabinet in this matter is not one that has been reassuring to the country. I have watched the members of the cabinet from day to day, and I think it is not the cabinet that should have brought down a Bill of so great importance to this people and to this House. The cabinet is exceedingly weak, particularly with regard to the representation of Ontario. Last night I had the opportunity of sitting in this House and hearing one of the most excellent discourses that have been delivered on the Bill, that is the speech by the hon. member for York, N.B. (Mr. Crocket) and by actual count during a good part of that speech there were only from five to six gentlemen sitting on the whole of the government side of the House, including from one to two cabinet ministers at various times. Now, hon. gentlemen opposite have insisted that minorities should be considered; but I must say that the scant treatment they have given to the minority in this House has not been such as might reasonably have been expected from a party that is so strong. I contend that at least ministers of the Crown should most of them be in the House, and listen to the various arguments that may be advanced with regard to legislation which is so important and in which this country is so deeply interested.

We have had various exhibitions since this debate began, and I must say that I think we have witnessed one of the most dramatic

Mr. COCKSHUTT.

episodes that have happened in the history of this country. In the first place, we had the speech of the right hon. gentleman to which I have already referred at some length. Then we had the retirement of the Minister of the Interior. That in itself was a comparatively serious matter, or at least I viewed it so on that occasion. But that matter, so far as I have been able to sift it out and to arrive at a conclusion upon it, was not quite so serious from the government standpoint as it appeared to be when it was acted before this House. It appears to me that it was really part of a great tragedy, so to speak, at the time, but it has ended almost in a comedy. The right hon. gentleman and his esteemed ex-Minister of the Interior, whose ability we all admire, acted their parts remarkably well, and I, as a new member of the House, was completely taken in. I really thought that the exhibition was genuine, and it was not until some time after that I was able to ascertain that after all it was a play to the gallery and to the country. This House sat with bated breath and whispered humbleness, and with ears strained, while the First Minister made the announcement, the serious announcement, that that right hand of his, the famous Minister of the Interior, who has been called, and probably rightly so, the Napoleon of the west, was to retire from his cabinet on account of disagreement over the school clauses of the Bill. When the First Minister made his announcement in the most solemn tones, and when the ex-Minister of the Interior rose to make his explanations and his exhibition, I thought a crisis had arrived in the history of the government and of this country. After the ex-minister made that exhibition he moved over from the First Minister two seats further east, in this House, and we thought that never more would the First Minister and the ex-Minister of the Interior come together. The First Minister might have said to himself: Where are you going, ex-minister? It puts me in mind of that little fairy tale that was told by one of the papers recently in which an old man sitting in one of the lanes in England was represented as calling to a boy passing along the road and saying: 'Where be'st going George?—Be going nowheres. Oh, thee must be going somewhere, lad.' 'No, I haint, I am coming back.' That is like what we have seen in this House. We have seen that the ex-Minister of the Interior is not going anywhere, he is simply coming back; and he has taken the clauses the right hon. gentleman introduced as an amendment to his measure, and accepts them as a full, complete and satisfactory offer to the Northwest Territories. He says, I am ready to accept these and to unite with you again, and give you my voice and my vote. That is what we have seen going on between these two hon. gentlemen in relation to these particular clauses. Now we have not been able to discover any great difference between