

highest to the lowest, sit in the House, take their medicine and say nothing. To the simplest question they have no answer, or if they attempt an answer—I should not put it in the plural but in the singular—or if the Prime Minister attempts an answer, it is an attempt not to give the information but to evade the questions put to him. I put it to the right hon. gentleman as a serious sensible man: Is it or is it not a question to which the opposition and the country have the right to an answer, why he rushed his Bill into parliament as the measure of a united government when he knew that his two most important ministers were diametrically opposed to one of the principal clauses in that Bill, and had placed themselves on record as irrevocably pledged against it time and again? Was not that somewhat peculiar? One by one the pretenses of the right hon. gentleman have been struck from him, and by this time he stands before this House and country pretty bare. He is no longer the somewhat picturesque object he was a few months ago. Shorn of his feathers and his beautiful colours, he is coming to be known more and more for what he is and what he has proved himself. If in 1896, my right hon. friend secured any popularity among the staunch stalwart Liberals of this country, he secured it solely because he then made himself the champion of provincial rights. And if to-day he has forfeited the respect, esteem and confidence of thousands and tens of thousands in this country, as he has, it is because he has at last come out in his true colours as being the opponent and not the champion of provincial rights. It is because he has reversed his position. The position of 1896 was apparently a brave one. That of 1905 is an entirely different one, and to it is due the loss of respect and confidence of which the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues are only too well aware. The speech which he delivered in this House not two weeks ago abounded in pretense and assumption, but when the facts come to be known these are stripped from it one after the other. He declared that he was about to put the crown of complete and absolute autonomy on these western territories, and all his people behind him cried out amen, and rent the air with their plaudits. But five minutes after any one of them that listened knew that the two most sparkling gems in that crown, the control of education, the right to the public lands, were missing and thus rendered his statement absolutely meaningless and without foundation. In 1896, what was the plea of the right hon. gentleman? It was that he wanted to consult the people whose interests were chiefly affected. He wanted to get at the exact condition of

things amongst the people of Manitoba in order that he might find out the exact remedy to be applied. He wanted to know exactly what the people desired. He was, as he had often boasted, a democrat up to the hilt and—he wished to find out exactly what the people required and carry out their will. What reason had he for not giving autonomy a year ago? Because he wanted to wait until he had ten representatives from that country in this House instead of four. He wanted also to have the executive of the Northwest here in order that he might confer with them. And yet when I asked the right hon. gentleman to-night whether he embodied in that educational clause any of the fruits of that wide and thorough consultation of the wishes of the 500,000 people of the Northwest, what answer has he? He must answer that he had not. When I asked him whether in that same clause he embodied the results of his conferences and interchanges of opinion with the executive of the Northwest Territories, his reply and that of Mr. Haultain taken together show that he did not.

I ask him and ask hon. members from the Northwest sitting on that side of the House if the educational clause embodied their last thought, or deepest conviction, or complete assent, to what ought to be given to their people in the Northwest, and I have but to ask the question to answer it. Can the right hon. Prime Minister say that he did? Yet in his speech he declared that what he had the benefit of was, not only the consultation with, but the advice of the representatives from the Northwest. Let him get up and answer now whether the educational clause embodied the advice, the last thought, and best thought of the representatives from the Northwest. Let any representative from the Northwest get up and say that it did so. I challenge them to-night—those that are here—I challenge them. Does that clause represent them? Did it represent them when it was brought down? Does it represent them now? There is not a man of them that will get up on his legs and say that it does. All of the preceding negotiations of the Northwest in reference to autonomy went on the assumption that the man chiefly to be employed, the medium chiefly to be considered, the representative through whom all the ideas should filter to the government, was the right hon. gentleman's Minister of the Interior. Does he deny that? The records show it. The whole course of the administration shows it. It was so in our time; the people from the outside get to the inside of the cabinet through an accredited member of it. It is more so now, because, at the instigation of my right hon. friend himself, the government have enlarged and strengthened the functions of the cabinet minister. Not only have they made each a cabinet minister as

Mr FOSTER.