

moment or two and contrast the reasons advanced by the hon. member for Red Deer with those advanced by the hon. member for Provencher. My hon. friend from Red Deer says we know no class or community in this country, no distinction of times and place, and that the only consideration which ought to move this government should be that of qualification. That is to say from whatever part of Canada, race or creed a man may come, he ought to be selected if he be the ablest and best qualified to fill the vacancy. The hon. member for Humboldt (Mr. Neely) however, in deference to the wishes of his constituents—and no doubt also in deference to the hope he has of being elected again some four years from now—trusts that the appointment will be given to a western man.

The hon. member for Provencher would go a little further—he would step down another grade from the position of the hon. member for Humboldt, and hopes that the new commissioner will be a western man and a farmer. The hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Clark) has a considerable task before him in this House, as was pointed out by the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) some weeks ago. He has many conversions to effect in the ranks of his own party. The resolution declares that in the opinion of this House the position of commissioner made vacant by the death of Mr. Greenway should be filled. The hon. member for Humboldt, who knows that this vacancy has existed for six months, acknowledges that it ought to be filled, but in order to make himself absolutely conscientious in opposing it he says that for it to be filled within six months is unseemly haste. The resolution goes on to declare that the position should be filled by the appointment of an able and practical farmer. In the first two positions that the appointment should be made and it should be made shortly, the hon. member for Provencher agrees. And I agree with him. In the next point—that is the appointee should be an able and practical farmer he agrees, and I agree with him. In the next point, that this farmer should come from the west the hon. member for Provencher coincides, and I coincide with him. He also agrees that the reasons are that the interests of agriculture should be looked after; and I agree with him. Wherein does the hon. gentleman differ from me? I propose to vote for this resolution and he proposes to vote against it. I agree with the resolution in all its details and every phrase it utters. The hon. member for Provencher does the same, but he comes to the conclusion that he will vote against the resolution, while I come to the conclusion that I will vote for it. The reason for the hon. member's conclusions, I am afraid, is that the government has decided that they cannot support this resolution, and the

hon. member for Provencher supports the government.

I desire to devote just a moment in answer to the remarks of the hon. member for Red Deer (M. Michael Clark). He told us that the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Staples) proved too much: he says that that hon. gentleman proved that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) was not capably administering the department over which he presides; that the Minister of Agriculture is a farmer, and therefore this proof should act as a warning against the appointment of farmers. And the hon. member for Provencher who evidently has been studying the appointments made by this government, warns the House, that if the government appoints a farmer that is no warrant that he will be a man able to fill the position. This resolution does not call for the appointment of a farmer because he is a farmer, but calls for the selection of a man in every respect fit to fill the position, and a farmer besides. It may be that the Minister of Agriculture is a farmer, but it is impossible to argue from that that a man could not be selected from among the farmers of Canada who would be a good Minister of Agriculture. The Board of Railway Commissioners, as has been stated by hon. members, is a most important body. No one appreciates more than I do the importance of that board. I should have thought it would be enough for the hon. member for Humboldt that the member who moved the resolution and gave credit to the government for the inauguration of that board to be able to state that as a reason for his determination to support this resolution, and not be drawn away from that position because the hon. member for Macdonald chose to criticise the Department of Agriculture. I should think it would be enough to prove to him that the hon. member was not animated by party feeling when he so freely gave credit to the government for the appointment of the railway board. I join in giving that credit, because the appointment of this board was a distinct step in advance for the people of this country. We must remember, however, that the establishment of the Railway Board was brought about much in the same way as the reforms we are now trying to bring about by this resolution—by petitions from the farmers of this country, by the agitation of municipal bodies and the strong and earnest effort of members on this side of the House. When, under these circumstances, we are willing to accord to the government credit for the appointment of the board, surely that should be enough to allow these hon. members at least to follow their first and virgin determination and support the resolution.