

condition. What he wants is to obtain results from the efforts of this Railway Commission. If a farmer were appointed to it just because he is a farmer, and did not ably represent the farming interests and all the interests of all the people of Western Canada as well as the farmers, the farmers of western Canada would be the first to condemn the government for appointing such a man. What the farmer of the west wants is that the government, in making the appointment, shall not consider any class distinction of any sort whatever, but shall appoint a man who has every qualification necessary for the proper carrying out of the duties of the office. I did not hear very distinctly all the remarks of the hon. member for Macdonald when he was introducing this resolution; but it did seem to me that he was endeavouring to bring it down to a very fine point. If I am not mistaken, he had reference to some man in his own constituency who had been highly recommended by the farmers of the west and whom he himself would be pleased to have appointed. These remarks from the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Staples) could not but lead to the conclusion that there was a coloured gentleman somewhere in the fence, and when he came to that part of his speech I felt that we had at last discovered the location of that coloured gentleman. Then the hon. member for Souris, who undertook to second this resolution, tried to impress on the government the necessity of filling this vacancy with a western Canadian farmer. Is it not rather peculiar that the hon. member for Souris does not see the position in which he places himself by supporting this motion? The hon. gentleman, like myself and some others in this House representing rural constituencies, is not a farmer but follows another profession. No doubt he thinks that in electing himself, a medical man, to represent them in this House, his constituents made the best choice possible. But he does not wish his own election to be taken as a precedent in the filling of the vacancy on the Board of Railway Commissioners, that vacancy must of necessity be filled by a farmer. But if the contention of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Clark) be correct, the hon. member for Souris should not occupy a seat in this House because his is a rural constituency, and the hon. gentleman should have seen that a farmer was sent here and not himself. I wish to say this, that so far as I am concerned, I am in sympathy with the word 'western' which is used in this resolution. When this House established the Board of Railway Commissioners, they made the number six, and there are only five at present. If this House saw fit in its wisdom to establish a board of six, and one seat becomes vacant, that seat ought to be filled. And in my opinion the board re-

Mr. NEELY.

quires a man who thoroughly understands and appreciates the conditions in the west. I am prepared to go that far in support of the resolution. I would like to see a western man appointed, and I think the government, when making a selection, ought to cast their eyes over the territory from Lake Superior to at least the Rocky mountains. I suppose a British Columbian would say to the Pacific coast. I mention this because I think that a western man, probably in the majority of cases, understands the western conditions better than any other man probably can. But having said that much, I must deprecate the unseemly haste expressed by it. This resolution calls for the immediate filling of this vacancy. But I am not aware that the country is suffering very seriously at present. It may be true that five men are doing the work of six. It may be that the western interests will be better represented on this board when a new appointment is made and a western man is given the appointment; but so far as that is concerned, the main thing in these appointments is to get a man who will fill the position in the best possible manner. And I think the government should take sufficient time to look over the ground carefully and consider the possibilities of the situation thoroughly before they make a selection of such grave importance.

There is no amendment proposed and I do not, for my part, intend presenting one, but I do not think it would be a good thing for this House to pass the resolution in its present shape. It would restrict too much the choice. I think it urges undue haste in the making of this appointment, and therefore in conclusion I would say that I am prepared to support the view that the appointment should be filled, and I would be glad indeed if the government would see their way clear to appoint a western man. But the other part of the resolution, which limits the choice to that of a farmer and demands the immediate filling of the office, I cannot conscientiously support.

Mr. A. MEIGHEN (Portage la Prairie). I had not intended addressing the House on this resolution because I did not anticipate that it would meet with the opposition that it has encountered. I have been rather amused at many of the reasons to which hon. members have had to resort in order to bring themselves into line with the party whip and lead themselves to what the hon. gentleman who has just spoken has described as a conscientious conclusion to oppose the motion. The hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Clark), took very high and mighty ground. The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Molloy) got down to something much more practical and made rather a frank statement of his position. He was followed by the hon. member for Humboldt (Mr. Neely) in much the same fashion; and I want to discriminate just for a