

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS.

SECOND READINGS.

Bill No. 78, respecting the Patent of Auto Wheels, Limited.—Mr. Fisher.

Bill No. 79, to incorporate the Bruce Peninsula Railway Company.—Mr. Middlebro.

Bill No. 81, to incorporate the Canadian Press Association.—Mr. H. Clark.

PROVINCIAL CONTROL OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

Mr. G. E. McCRAVEY (Saskatoon): The hon. the Minister of the Interior, in the course of his remarks, expressed some surprise that the Opposition should have found it wise at this stage to inquire of the Government what progress was being made in the transfer to the western provinces of their natural resources. The Opposition need make no apology for calling the attention of Parliament to the condition in which this question now stands. The attitude of the Prime Minister has been known to this country for nearly ten years. His views have been the subject of two general elections; his pledges to the country have been most pronounced; and I would say, if there are irrevocable pronouncements on public questions, the pledges of the Prime Minister are in that class. This Government has been in power for nearly two and a half years, and so little has been done that, when we on this side ask for information as to the present state of the matter, we simply have quoted to us speeches delivered by members of the Opposition. Surely those speeches do not affect Government policy to-day. The Government is not looking for acquiescence in every respect in all its policies. The Government is elected because its policies in many respects differ from those of the Opposition, and the Government must assume its responsibilities. It is all very well for the Minister of the Interior to say to my hon. friend from Medicine Hat (Mr. Buchanan), who has raised this question: What are your views? Have you come round to our views? He might as well ask what are my views. I have no hesitation in saying that I want to see the policy of the Prime Minister carried out; but what I think about this does not matter to the western provinces. What does matter to them is what the Prime Minister thinks.

The responsibility of the Government is to carry out with reasonable speed the

[Mr. Roche.]

policies which it propounded before coming into power. Perhaps there is an exception to such a case, and it is when the necessity for carrying out a policy has passed or when there has been a change in public opinion. The situation with regard to this question of the transfer to the western provinces of their natural resources would not come under either of those heads.

The very fact that the Prime Minister was elected on such a policy has given great strength to that policy throughout the West. There has been no change of sentiment with reference to the question, as shown by the declaration of the Saskatchewan Legislature approving the position taken by the Prime Minister in 1911, and also by the memorandum signed by the Premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Roche) expresses the view that probably Mr. Scott did not expect that the province of Saskatchewan would ever receive these natural resources. The hon. minister has a very good understanding of human nature. When proposals have been postponed as this Government has postponed the proposal of its own leader in this matter; when promises are not carried out as in this case, what more natural than that the people should begin to feel that the proposals will never be carried into effect or the promises fulfilled? If after such delay as in this case Mr. Scott has come to such a conclusion as the Minister of the Interior has indicated, the fact that the minister realizes it shows, as I have said, that he knows something of human nature. But that there is some unrest through the western provinces on this question I am quite certain. No doubt members of the Government have seen the speech of the hon. member for Calgary, in which he expresses himself as willing to throw in his lot against the Government if the natural resources are not handed over to the province of Alberta. Of course, I am not attempting to quote him with verbal accuracy, but I think I have given the sense of what he said. Why did the hon. gentleman say that? Surely it was only because he discerned among the Conservatives some dissatisfaction and felt that if he could not assure them as to the action of the Prime Minister, he could at least assure them of what he himself would do if the Prime Minister's pledges were not carried out.

There are in this Administration three prominent members from the province of Manitoba: the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers), the Minister of the Interior