

lifts up his hands in holy horror and indignation—simulated, I have no doubt,—and tries to make political capital out of the situation, although he says himself that he stands where he did in 1905, and that if he were back in power he would not restore the natural resources to these provinces. We can very well see the spirit that is animating the right hon. gentleman in endeavouring to make political capital out of this particular incident.

Some of the western papers did me the honour of quoting, or misquoting, statements I am said to have made in the province of Saskatchewan prior to the last provincial election, and I wish to give an emphatic denial publicly to the report that represented that I had stated upon one or two occasions, in the city of Regina and in the city of Saskatoon, that unless the Conservatives were returned to power Mr. Borden would not restore the natural resources. It was a silly remark to attribute to me, a remark that I plead guilty of, for it was never uttered by me. I might explain, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Borden, as leader of the Conservative party, had laid down in his platform that he was in favour of restoring the natural resources, the people of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, at the provincial elections, had voted against that policy. Not only had they done that, but at the last Dominion election they had voted against the policy of Mr. Borden. I asked was it reasonable to expect the Prime Minister to force upon an unwilling people something which they did not desire themselves. That is as far as my remarks went, and I think they were very moderate under the circumstances.

I know the contention has been put forward by hon. gentlemen opposite that there were other questions at issue in the Dominion elections of 1911, that among them was the question of reciprocity, that the people voted in favour of reciprocity, and they ask: Why not give them that? There is quite a difference; reciprocity was a national question, it was an international question, it was a question in which every province of the Dominion was interested, and therefore the majority in the country, as in all countries where responsible government is in vogue, must rule. But this question of the return of the natural resources was specially applicable to the two provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan; it was an issue in the two provincial elections; the policy has been turned down in each of these provinces by large majorities; the Liberal Governments have been returned to

power; and therefore the request of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister for a little time for consideration until these gentlemen can get together and agree amongst themselves is not unreasonable. You cannot blame the Prime Minister for taking time to consider this question in all its aspects.

I have quoted, and the Prime Minister has quoted, the statements that have been made on the platform and off the platform, in this House and outside of this House, by certain prominent Liberals as to the position they occupy upon this question; and in the face of that we have this impossible, unreasonable request made by these same gentlemen that we hand over all these resources that every Liberal stated it would be foolish for them to ask for. Are these gentlemen in earnest, are they sincere, are they consistent? They have made three or four requests, and we do not know which one they place most emphasis upon. If they get together, come to some finality upon the question and show that they are in earnest, it will then be time enough for this Government to give serious consideration to the matter.

It has been quoted as evidence in favour of the position of hon. gentlemen opposite that Premier Roblin signed this request. Premier Roblin asked for the same treatment for Manitoba that the other western provinces got, either upon the question of finance or upon the question of their lands. We granted the request of Premier Roblin, we gave the province of Manitoba equal terms with the other provinces of the West, and he is satisfied; but when the other two premiers asked him not only to retain what he had but also to get the natural resources for his province, most assuredly, if he had refused to sign that, would not these gentlemen have heaped opprobrium upon him for his refusal? The request made by the three premiers was, in my judgment, an unreasonable request. Having made the financial arrangements with each of these provinces at the time of the passage of the Autonomy Bill in lieu of public lands, the request that in addition we should hand over all the natural resources, in face of the declaration of these hon. gentlemen as to the difficulties in the way of immigration and from other standpoints, is an unreasonable request which I do not think Parliament would approve of, and is one which at the present time this Government does not approve of.

At six o'clock the House took recess.