

also in the matter of their attitude towards the head of the government. I cannot, therefore, nor do I think the people of the country will, accept the explanation given. There is a reason underlying the public statement which has been made, and I had hoped that we would have heard that reason, which would account for the extraordinary disturbance which has taken place. The hon. leader of this House has been frank and consistent in giving his view ; he has accepted the explanation of his former colleagues, but as for myself, in the face of the testimony which I have just read, coming from three of the leading members of the contingent, I cannot possibly do so. Their real motive, in my opinion, was not only to make a change in the personnel of the premiership, but also to make a change in the policy of the government. It is very well known that the question which has unhappily divided the people of Canada recently, and which has been floating on the political horizon for a great many years, had something to do with it. Six years ago that question could easily have been settled. Six years ago that question was one which could have easily been settled by diplomatic action, or could have been settled in a variety of ways which I do not now propose to comment upon, but it was allowed to be badgered about in the courts ; petitions were presented here, and they were referred for further consideration, and year after year went by, until now six years have elapsed since that burning question first arose, and what has been the effect ? That you have divided the people of Canada into two camps, and if we have an election to-morrow the probability is that it will be on the sectarian cry. It is now quite impossible to discuss this question logically and from a constitutional standpoint with the great mass of the people of Canada. They allow their own prejudices to govern their judgment, and therefore it is a hopeless thing now to successfully obtain the approval of the great body of the people of Canada in support of the constitutional mode. I say it with deep regret, and the press of Canada is largely responsible for misleading the people. They have pandered to their prejudices, until now it is absolutely impossible to control them, and the question I recognize to-day cannot be satisfactorily settled under any legislation that we can inaugurate, I

say so with very deep regret, because I do feel that the constitution has been severely wrenched by the action which the cabinet has taken. It is very well known that there were certain members of the government that were always averse to that view of it, and here we can recognize the very proper action taken by the ex-Minister of Agriculture when he felt bound to resign his seat in the cabinet because he knew that, composed as the cabinet was at that time, it was hopeless that that question could be settled satisfactorily in accordance with the circumstances of the country, and it amply justifies the position he took then and that he has persistently held since that day. With the province of Manitoba now taking an aggressive attitude, it is hopeless, even if we pass the bill here, to enforce it. One can recognize how utterly impossible it would be, in a measure of that kind, that requires the co-operation and support of the municipal authorities in the locality, for federal legislation to prevail against the hostile attitude of the province. It is, I think, a very unfortunate, and a very sad condition of affairs. We hear a good deal about the coercion of Manitoba. "Do not coerce Manitoba" ; but it is nothing to coerce a small minority in that country, who are dependent entirely upon the generosity and fairness of a large majority who have control of public affairs. I do not think that it speaks well for the majority in that country. I think it is very unfortunate and very unhappy ; and the very clause on which Manitoba relies was a clause placed in the constitution for the protection of the minority in Quebec. Let me ask you, if the rights of the minority in Quebec had been encroached upon by legislation, would there not have been an outcry all over the Dominion ? Do you think for one moment that it would have taken six years to rectify it ? Certainly not, there would have been found ways and opportunities for very much sooner vetoing the legislation and making it inoperative. The majority of this country have not shown that generosity and forbearance that they should in reference to a question of this kind. The people have seized it, and having seized it, the politicians of the day are afraid of it. We find all over, in the constituencies that are controlled by the majority element, that they are afraid to touch this question. They say "do not coerce Manitoba," as if we were