

The PRIME MINISTER. I cannot give any information on that matter, because that portion of the force, though nominally under my supervision, was left to my colleague the Minister of the Interior, who had the organization of the Yukon.

Mr. FOSTER. That is just the point. If the Prime Minister will allow me to express the opinion, it does not seem to me that the Minister of the Interior ought to have anything at all to do with the disposition of the mounted police, except by way of advice to the First Minister. I think a serious mistake has been made in turning everything over to the Minister of the Interior, who has had, not only too much to do, but who has had, what he never should have had a control in other departments, and used it in a way which has not been good. I hope the First Minister, when he is the head of the mounted police, will be its head right through, no matter where the mounted police goes. I have confidence in the First Minister—in a guarded way, of course—and very great confidence in the efficient deputy who has charge of that body; and I should like to see it kept in charge of the First Minister and his deputy, and not turned over to any other minister. I believe it has been used by the other minister as it would not have been used by my hon. friend.

The PRIME MINISTER. I must take exception to the too flattering remarks of which I feel very proud, from my hon. friend towards myself, and I must say that his criticisms of my colleague, the Minister of the Interior, are hardly fair. It was felt at the time that it would be better—and I am not prepared to give up my judgment on this point—to turn over the whole administration of the Yukon to one responsible minister. Different departments had to do with that administration; but the Yukon is so exceptionally situated, and is so far from all communication, that it has to be treated exceptionally, and I believe that the system we followed was, after all, the best we could follow under the circumstances. It would have been almost impossible to carry on the administration under another system. Now, I put another question to my hon. friend. He put a question to me a moment ago, which I answered calmly. Does he not think that, after all, the administration of the Yukon has come out more successfully than he anticipated at one time, and that on the whole it has been reasonably satisfactory?

Mr. FOSTER. I am quite ready to give my right hon. friend an answer according to my lights. They say that a drunken man escapes most wonderfully sometimes when he tumbles about, and the administration has got out of it a little better than at one time I feared they would. But I cannot say, and I do not believe in my heart, that the administration of the Yukon has redounded to the credit of the Minister of the Interior.

Mr. FOSTER.

I do not think that under the surface, things have been as they ought to have been; and yet, the disposition here in Ottawa has been to close the ears and steel the mind against anything that was not complimentary towards the administration of affairs in that far-off country. The minister and the ministry would have done better if they had taken it a little more for granted that there were grievances, and if they had not steeled themselves against every representation of a grievance which came from there. I make up my mind largely from talking with friends who have passed months and some of them years in the Yukon, men whom I know, and in whom I have great confidence; and I am bound to say that I do not believe the Yukon has been administered by the Department of the Interior as successfully as it should have been, by a great deal. I am not going to say that the distance, and the very great difficulties of communication at first, are not to be taken into account; and we cannot expect any man to do superhuman things. Fair toleration must be allowed when we take these circumstances into account; but taking them into account, I cannot say very much for the administration of the Yukon. The government did not do what would satisfy the people of this country, and be a benefit all round, namely, have a fair and impartial investigation by a Royal Commission into the charges that were made. Then, if the charges were unfounded, the government would have had their own vindication. If they were well founded, the right hon. gentleman must acknowledge that it is the duty of the government to correct every grievance, and have every wrong righted. If that commission had been given, the clamour would have been stilled for one of two reasons—either that the charges would have been proved to have been false, or they would have been proved true to a certain extent, and the government must have remedied the grievances. But the Minister of the Interior seems to have gone on the assumption that every word or story of wrongdoing in the Yukon, was to be construed into an attack upon himself and his administration, and he steadily denied and resisted. The great mistake the government have made in connection with the Yukon, if they ask a candid opinion, is in not putting in there a commission of judges, a first-rate commission, who would have carried the confidence of the country through and through and letting them go to the bottom of the whole matter. That would have satisfied the country, and indicated the grievances, and affairs would have been much better managed than they have been. I hope if I have not satisfied my right hon. friend with the tenor of what I have said, I have satisfied him that I have given him my honest opinion.

The PRIME MINISTER. That is what I wanted to have. I suppose my hon. friend and myself might discuss this matter till