

place. I speak in his presence and he will correct me if I am inaccurate in what I am about to say. Mr. Haultain, in connection with the preparation of these measures, gave the government the benefit of his great experience and great ability; not only that, but he placed at their disposal the Territorial officers, so that every possible aid might be afforded to this administration in the preparation of these Bills. He did this generously and fairly and properly;—so great was his regard for the proprieties of public life, so complete his observance of the reticence which the conditions imposed upon him as a gentleman that, while that discussion with the members of the administration went on, he absolutely refrained from any communication with me or with any political friends as to the nature of that measure. He was opposed to certain provisions of the measure; and he had a right, as prime minister of the territories—nay, more, as a citizen of this country—to have his own opinions as to the wisdom of those provisions.

And what happened? Two provinces were established. Mr. Haultain took up his residence in the province of Saskatchewan. He had been prime minister of the Territories for fifteen years; he had been a member of the Territorial council for nearly eighteen years. Yet the lieutenant governor, whose chief adviser he had been for many years in that great country, saw fit to pass him by and to call a member then enjoying a seat in this House and who had not been a member of the Territorial legislature, at any time, I believe. Ignoring Mr. Haultain, the lieutenant governor called to the office of prime minister the gentleman to whom I have referred. I say that was not generous treatment, it was not fair nor even decent treatment, of Mr. Haultain. And I say, further,—and I say it of hon. gentlemen opposite to their faces—that I do not believe that this would have been done by Lieutenant Governor Forget except for interference from these hon. gentlemen. There may be a denial of that, but I venture to think that that denial will not be generally accepted by the people of Canada. The lieutenant governor, it seems to me would never have ventured to take the course he did with regard to Mr. Haultain if there had not been some dictation or some interference from those in power here at Ottawa.

What does it mean, if my assumption is correct? The office of lieutenant governor is an important office under the constitution. Is that office to be degraded, so that it shall become a mere part of the party machine? Is the lieutenant governor to co-operate with the government officials and the ballot thieves who steal elections? I venture to think that, of all the incidents by which the present administration will be judged, there is none that will more redound to their discredit in years to come than this ignoring of Mr. Haultain.

And we have the Minister of the Interior

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

(Hon. Mr. Oliver). He is not in his place. I wish he were; I would like to make one or two observations in his presence in regard to his attitude during that election. He went into the new provinces, taking the ground that he was bound to interfere in the elections, because, as he said, his department had been attacked. How his department could be attacked in a provincial election in Alberta and Saskatchewan, I fail to understand. But if we wanted any denial of the statement of the Minister of the Interior, we could not have a more express and specific denial than that which has been given to-day by the member who moved the address, and who said that the discussion was upon subjects, with which the Department of the Interior is in no wise concerned. The Minister of the Interior went into these provinces, and, both by precept and example, he encouraged his officers to treat with the most absolute contempt a resolution which had been most unanimously passed by this House during a previous session. This resolution covered nothing new; it was simply an embodiment of a principle which had been acted upon by this government over and over again since it took office in 1896, a principle which had been declared over and over again by the Prime Minister himself when dealing with the interference of public officers in political affairs. This resolution was as follows:

That whilst it is desirable that every official in the employ of the government of Canada should enjoy perfect freedom of political opinion and the untrammelled exercise of his franchise in accord therewith, no official should be engaged or be permitted to engage in partisan work of any description in the election of a representative to a provincial or Dominion legislature.

That resolution, accepted by both political parties, accepted by the Prime Minister, was passed by the House—much to the regret, as I observed at the time, of the Minister of the Interior. And what did the Minister of the Interior say about it in an interview in the west? Before reading that to the House, let me call the Prime Minister's attention to the way in which that principle has been enforced in the past with regard to Conservative officials. Over and over again, public officers have been dismissed by the present administration upon the statement of a member of this House that they had spoken or canvassed in favour of a political party. One man in the constituency I formerly represented, the city of Halifax, was dismissed upon the representation of Mr. Benjamin Russell, now a judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, that this officer at a public meeting, had asked him a question with regard to the Manitoba school question. This is what the Minister of the Interior said: They have the power of speech, and therefore they are entitled to express their political opinions. They are entitled to express them