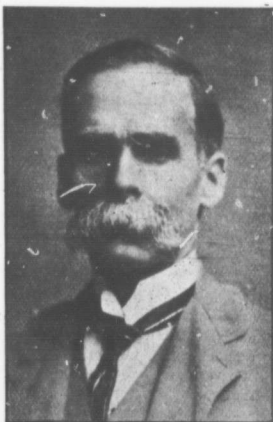


self dwelt almost exclusively. If his regret was genuine, he took a curious method of showing it.

The remarkable circumstance of Mr. Oliver's re-election by acclamation punctures the whole bubble of agitation over the school matter. Under our parliamentary system the election of a member of the House upon taking office has a peculiar significance. When the Reform Bill of 1832 was under discussion in the British House of Lords it was proposed by Lord Northampton to insert a clause to render it unnecessary for members of the House of Commons to vacate their seats upon acceptance of office as ministers. Lord Grey, the prime minister, favored the proposal but it was postponed and ultimately dropped. The proposal was revived in the House of Commons in 1834 but met with little favor. Upon the revival of the agitation for reform, by Lord John Russell in 1852 the question was revived, and again in 1854, and Lord John Russell himself made a speech in favor of it but the principle at the root of the law seemed to stick. When in 1866 another Reform Bill was laid upon the table by Mr. Gladstone it contained no clause relieving a member of the necessity of re-election, a principle which has existed since the time of Queen Anne. According to May's Constitutional History this principle has been "resolutely and persistently maintained." That principle is the constitutional right of the electors to declare that a person whom they had lately chosen whilst in an independent position and free to devote his time and attention in their behalf, and who afterwards accepts an office which must require a considerable portion of his time, and also to a certain extent must cripple his independent judgment, should go before his constituents in order to know whether, in these altered circumstances,

they were willing to continue him as their representative. Mr. Oliver was selected by the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as the Minister of the Interior in succession to Mr. Sifton who had resigned because he disagreed with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's view of clause 16 of the Anatomy Bill, which is the school clause. Mr. Oli-



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ver upon appealing to his constituents did so as the direct representative of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the policy of the government. His re-election, therefore, by acclamation proves to a demonstration that the people of Western Canada are quite satisfied with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's policy on the school question. That's what makes the debate now so uninteresting.