

autonomy Bills passed this House. The people of the West, therefore, will receive little consolation from the speech of the leader of the Opposition to-day, for were the Liberal party back in power he would do just exactly what he has done in the past—refuse to the people of the West the restoration of their natural resources.

The leader of the Opposition has said that the Conservative chickens are now coming home to roost. If occasionally we do welcome our chickens back to roost, I do not think we can be accused of occupying that position quite as frequently as do hon. gentlemen of the Opposition, and I do think we can make the accusation of inconsistency and insincerity against the right hon. leader of the Opposition much more frequently than it can be made against the leader of the Government. After I have quoted a few expressions of his own and some of his colleagues on that side of the House, including the old cock himself, I am sure that the right hon. gentleman will admit that even in this case his chickens have come home to roost. It just happened that upon this very question the Prime Minister of Saskatchewan, a gentleman who has boxed the compass in his efforts to make party capital on this question of the restoration of the natural resources to the provinces, when the autonomy Bills were first discussed in this Parliament, took the position that the natural resources should be restored to the provinces of the West. He did it in 1901; he did it in 1902, and in 1903; but when it came to 1905, at the time the autonomy Bills were up for discussion in the House, when there was a premiership dangling before his eyes, he entirely reversed his position and came out in favour of the autonomy Bills, which provided for compensation in lieu of lands instead of the position he had occupied prior to that time.

I desire to quote a few words from a speech of the Hon. Mr. Scott on this question. It was in the session of 1911-12 of the Saskatchewan Legislature. He had brought in a resolution, not such a request as he is now making from this Government, but merely taking the ground that the public domains in the northern portion of Saskatchewan should be restored to that province, "those of a purely local character;" and the Opposition in that Legislature brought in an amendment stating that they were in favour of having the agricultural, timber and mineral lands restored as well as the water-powers. In criticising that

amendment of the Opposition, the Premier of Saskatchewan said:

The proposal is that the Government on behalf of the province shall ask for certain resources, all the hinterland, and all the public domain, with the exception of the agricultural lands. I really think, Mr. Speaker, that I have the right to urge that this Government should be given a unanimous mandate by this House in behalf of that proposal. . . I think, if he would accept kindly advice from me—

That is referring to the leader of the Opposition in the Legislature—

—that it would be well for him to return to the paths of moderation and good sense, and to cease the foolish action which it seems to me his sub-amendment means. This sub-amendment is an absurd production; it asks impossible things. It asks things that would leave Saskatchewan in an inequitable position, make Saskatchewan richer than any other province in Canada, except, possibly, the province of British Columbia.

So the request that the Premiers are to-day making, that all resources, including water-powers, mineral lands and agricultural lands, should be handed over to the provinces, was, just two years ago, considered by the gentleman who is now asking it on behalf of that province to be an absurd proposition, a foolish proposition, and he then asked the leader of the Opposition to be mild and moderate in his request, saying that it would place Saskatchewan in a position far superior to that which she should occupy. Yet, in the face of that declaration, the Premier of Saskatchewan has placed himself on record as asking these impossible things which he voted against in his own Legislature in 1911-12.

Mr. MACDONALD: Was he not only asking what the present Premier of this country promised he would give him?

Mr. ROCHE: I am comparing the statement of the hon. member for Medicine Hat in accusing the leader of the Government of inconsistency and insincerity. I am asking how it is that the hon. member for Medicine Hat has never raised his voice, inside or outside of this House, in condemnation of the policy described by Premier Scott.

Mr. MACDONALD: I will tell you why: because he was expecting the Premier of this country to keep his word.

Mr. ROCHE: Then, he did not expect the Premier of his own province to do so. He expects the Premier of this Dominion to keep his word, but he has so poor an opinion of the Premier of his own province

[Mr. Roche.]