It is the first time since I have been in the house that a minister of the crown has not answered a civil and proper question, and has refused to give me information about a bill.

I am not surprised at the present minister bringing in a bill such as the one before the house. It is altogether different from the various private bills which have been introduced in the past. One of them was brought in for four years in a row by the former member for Kindersley, Mr. Jaenicke. He was a member of the C.C.F. The present bill goes much further than his, which was a private bill introduced by a private member. The government is now attempting to do something about this matter. I may say that I look upon the bill as very largely a political bill. The minister has even failed to say who is asking for it.

I once described the House of Commons, when I first entered it, as a gentlemen's social club. That is what it is intended to be. As individual members we cannot all think alike, because we are different by temperament and training, environment and education, and in many other ways. I am strongly opposed to the bill. These are my own honest views after many years' study of the problem. If you look at the matter more closely and examine the context of the bill you will see that it is different from the bills introduced on the same subject by private members. This bill is mentioned in the speech from the throne with a great flourish of trumpets. They indicate what they are going to do. I look on all these matters as secondary. They want to propose a change in the office of the governor general. We have one of the greatest soldiers of all times as our governor general now. He is the greatest soldier in the history of the world. They want a change in the flag, in the text of the anthem, in the name of Dominion day; they want to end appeals to the privy council, and to do many similar things.

In my opinion those matters are only secondary when people have not houses in which to live, and should be allowed to stand over. At its meeting at Calgary the Canadian Bar Association asked that this bill should stand over. The bar is against it. In Ontario and Quebec the bill is not worth the paper it is written on at the present time, because a contract was made at confederation and it cannot be overriden here. As I say, these matters are only secondary; they are not primary.

Let us now look at this bill that was forecast in the speech from the throne and see what it actually means. What are appeals by statutory right? My answer is that they are based on some statute, either provincial or dominion. In Ontario and Quebec there is the right of appeal on certain matters. This bill extinguishes that right. In the case of Ontario and Quebec this right is based on a contract made at confederation and before. In the other provinces the situation is somewhat the same, but it may vary in the maritimes.

I should like to quote what the Hon. Howard Ferguson, who was then premier of Ontario, said when he dealt with this matter. This is in a textbook on the Statute of Westminster. I think it is one of the most learned textbooks I have ever read. It is written by a great teacher in England, a great student and a great professor. At page 183 of his book, "The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status", Mr. K. C. Wheare, the author, says:

> The report of the O.D.L. conference—

He is referring to a committee that met here when my former leader was Prime Minister.

> —was unanimously approved by the Canadian House of Commons in May, 1930 . . . At the general election of July, 1930, the Conservative party, under the leadership of Mr. R. B. Bennett, was returned to power. Before Mr. Bennett left for the imperial conference of 1930 he received from the premier of Ontario, Mr. Howard Ferguson, also a Conservative, a memorandum in which the terms of the proposed statute were severely examined.

In a footnote the author states:

> The following statement of the course of events is based upon Mr. Bennett's survey of negotiations in his speech, introducing the resolution requesting the passing of the statute, in the Canadian House of Commons in 1931.

Then at the bottom of page 183 the quotation continues:

> In particular the two clauses quoted above were criticised as vague and inconclusive, and it was asserted "that no restatement of the procedure for amending the constitution of Canada can be accepted by the province of Ontario that does not fully and frankly acknowledge the right of all the provinces to be consulted and to become parties to the decision arrived at." Quebec and all the other provinces proved to be in agreement with these views. In consequence it was necessary for the Canadian delegation at the imperial conference of 1930 to ask that, in effect, the whole question of the repeal of the Colonial Laws Validity Act, in its application to Canada, should be left in suspense until the views of the provinces on the matter could be obtained. The reference to the Dominion of Canada and to the provinces of Canada was therefore deleted from the proposed clause, and it appeared in the schedule drawn up by the conference with a specific reference to Australia and New Zealand only. It was stated that "a section dealing exclusively with the Canadian position will be inserted after the representations of the provinces have received consideration."

What happened in New Zealand and in Australia? This so-called Statute of Westminster was one of the most mischievous statutes I think we have ever had in the history of the British empire because it caused a divided situation. Hon. members will notice