

and it is in regard of the system of pensioning ex-ministers of the Crown. As I said before was not there, and I am not personally responsible, but I want to say on this occasion as a minister of the Crown or speaking as an individual, that personally I am opposed to the whole superannuation system. I can see personally no more reason why a public servant should have a superannuation allowance than any farmer who is working hard all his life, or blacksmith or merchant, should have a superannuation allowance.

Well, it is rather a novel constitutional theory that because a minister of the Crown accepting office did not happen to be in the cabinet at the time a certain measure passed, he is not responsible. I have always regarded it—I have the authorities under my hand, but will not go to the trouble of quoting them—as an elementary constitutional principle that any gentleman accepting a position in the cabinet, whether here or in Great Britain, made himself absolutely responsible for the measures that cabinet had passed and their actions with regard to these measures. There can be no question about that. My hon. friend the Postmaster General may have some warrant for his statements—I do not know about that—but I think it is a matter as to which we should have some explanation from the First Minister.

Then my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Hyman), speaking at Sarnia, said, as reported in the Toronto 'News' of the 14th November, 1905 :

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, seeing the Indemnity Bill is unpopular with the people, has given his promise that it will be reconsidered at the next session when measures will be taken to have it satisfactorily amended.

Again, an hon. member of this House, the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Pardee) said, speaking at Oakdale, as reported in the 'Globe' of the 18th October, 1905 :

He believed the pension clauses of the Bill were a mistake, and he was totally opposed to them. If elected he would work and vote for their repeal, and he understood the government would see to the revision of the Act in this respect early next session.

I bring these matters to the attention of the government and the country in order that we may have some proper understanding as to constitutional usage, as understood by the government, with regard to such matters. I have only this further to say respecting the subject alluded to by the Postmaster General—and it was alluded to by myself when speaking in the same by-election and in the by-election at Wentworth—that I should be very glad indeed to have the whole question opened up and the subject thoroughly discussed ; and in that discussion I should be most happy to have that particular measure in which I am supposed to be most personally interested taken up in the very first in-

stance. If there is to be criticism upon the measures of last session, it seems to me that the best criticism lies in this, that they were passed so late in the session, and that they received no adequate explanation and justification. Let them be justified now or repealed. I believe that so far as the indemnity to members is concerned, it can be justified. I am prepared to discuss that question on the floor of the House. The pension measure was drawn hurriedly and not well considered. I agree with my hon. friend the Postmaster General that there are some features of that Bill which ought to be amended, and will give my support to amendments of it in that regard. And if there are any charges or statements to be made with regard to this measure, or with regard to the circumstances under which it was passed, it is right that those statements and those charges should be made here on the floor of the House in the presence of the gentlemen who are affected by them ; and I trust that we shall have that full, free and open discussion which will enable any hon. gentleman in this House to bring to the attention of parliament and the country any circumstances or features of the subject which he may think require condemnation by this parliament and the people.

I do not propose to revamp the discussion of last session with regard to the Autonomy Bills. I then took such ground with regard to those Bills as I thought right and in the public interest. That ground has been described and characterized in various ways. In some quarters it has been characterized as bigoted, in other quarters it has been characterized as anaemic. I think it was presented to this House with a fair measure of clearness, and I do not think there was any bigotry in the hearts of the members who supported the propositions made from this side. But referring to the establishment of the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, there is one matter upon which I desire to say a few words, and that is the extraordinary series of incidents which led to the passing over of the man who had been prime minister of the Territories since 1891, and who had been a member of the Territorial council or legislature from 1888 to 1906. Mr. Haultain's record in the Territorial government received, I think, on every occasion, a practically unanimous endorsement by the people of the Territories. On the last occasion on which he appealed to the people, he went to them on the issue of provincial autonomy. They declared themselves in favour of the proposal that they should be established into new provinces. The government took up that question in January, 1905. Mr. Haultain was summoned and came to Ottawa. The Minister of Justice (Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick) who had, largely, the care and preparation of the measures that were brought down, is in his