

thoroughly conversant with the farming interest will be appointed.

Mr. MICHAEL CLARK (Red Deer). Mr. Speaker, I think the House will be in pretty general agreement with me when I state that if, as the hon. member for East Lambton (Mr. Armstrong) said, that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) threw down the political gauntlet, it is certainly equally true that the hon. member himself showed great readiness in taking that gauntlet up. He introduced into his opening remarks an amount of heat which, to my mind, is utterly foreign to any agricultural question. I think the spirit that should animate us is one of pastoral calm, but I failed to catch that mood in the remarks of the hon. member. The Minister of Agriculture needs no defence from me; but, after all, I should venture to urge that he has the right of every other member of the House to defend himself when he is attacked—and he was very strongly attacked, for a mild mannered man. I am sorry the Minister of Agriculture has left; I should have offered him a little consolation. I am told that the late Sir John A. Macdonald used to say that if you want to find the best apple tree you do not need to look at the branches,—find the tree with the most stones lying under it. Judged by that standard the House and the country will agree that, in the Minister of Agriculture we have a man who gives most punctiliously careful, able and successful attention to the duties of a very important office.

Now, to turn to the resolution before the House, if it comes to a vote I intend to vote against that resolution. It did not suit me to give a silent vote, because I happen to resemble both the mover and the seconder of the resolution in that I represent an agricultural constituency. I have the advantage of at least the seconder of the resolution in that I not only represent an agricultural constituency but am myself a farmer, so far as Canada is concerned.

Mr. SCHAFFNER. So am I as much a farmer as the hon. member (Mr. Michael Clark). How much does he farm—how many acres?

Mr. CLARK. I am going to prove still that I have the advantage over my hon. friend and interrupter; I am a farmer; I have never done anything but farm in Canada. Can my hon. friend state that also? He is silent now. He admits that I have the advantage over him. I am not sure but that, if I were a careful man, the fact that I am a farmer would make me careful about voting against the resolution because, after all, the appointment to the railway commissionership is a kind of rig a man could drive. The Minister of Railways and Canals need not take that re-

mark in any spirit more serious than the spirit in which I make it.

I think that the mover of the resolution clearly proved too much. If I understand his argument, his attempt was to prove that where the farmers' interests are particularly concerned, a farmer was the man to do the business of the position. Then the hon. gentleman immediately started out to disprove his own position by proving that a horrible mistake had been made in the case of the Department of Agriculture by appointing a farmer to the position. If the Minister of Agriculture, being a practical farmer, is such a horrible failure in his position, surely that ought to warn us against supporting the mover of the resolution. In regard to the seconder of the resolution, I am bound to say that, as I listened to him, I wondered how he ever had the conscience, being, as I understand a medical man, to sit as the representative of an agricultural community. If he holds the farmer to be of such importance as his language describes him, if he was not merely repeating that kind of speech which all of us make more or less when we are appealing to an agricultural community—for I believe it is a common saying in this country that everyone is a farmer at election time—if he was not merely repeating one of these speeches, he should retire from his present position and let a farmer succeed him to represent a purely farming constituency. What did the hon. gentleman say in regard to the farmer? He also proved too much. He said that the farmer's importance is such that everybody knows it. If that be so, you cannot pick the wrong man for the position of the Railway Commission. For, if everyone knows the importance of the farmer, whoever you appoint will look after the farmers.

Now, I wish, in a couple of sentences, to give the House the reasons why I object to the principle of the resolution. My hon. friends the mover and seconder of the resolution will, at any rate, give to me the credit that I cannot be speaking for my constituents' support, nor am I speaking from any selfish or grafting reason, because I am a farmer and a representative of farmers. My first reason for objecting to the principle of the resolution is that I have held the political creed known as the Liberal creed all my life, and it forbids me to make class distinction. I had a friend who spent his early years in Australia. He was one of the best men I ever knew in the north of England, and one of the best farmers in my native county. In the days when he went to Australia, in many places throughout the empire there was a property qualification for voting. A paper was sent to him containing a column, which he was to fill up stating the qualifications by which he claimed to be put