

on the day of the inauguration ceremonies. I am happy to say that the weather in the western prairies is almost always beautiful—unfortunately my voice is poor to-day for I have been under the doctor's care ever since I came east. We had present on that occasion distinguished personages; distinguished personages who too seldom visit the west, and who, I trust will come oftener. We had on that occasion cordial harmony among all the people of the western provinces; a harmony too soon to be rent asunder by a political warfare so bitter and so passionate that I suppose Canada has never seen its like. We had our children there in thousands raising their voices in the prairie air, singing their Canadian songs so beautiful and with such ardent youthful patriotism. I am not at all surprised, Sir, that His Excellency should be touched with the scene, and that he should in the speech from the Throne give vent to the pleasure which he felt on the occasion of his visit to the cities of Regina and Edmonton. And, Sir, I am here to-day to say that every man, woman, and child in Alberta and Saskatchewan have as happy a remembrance of the visit of His Excellency as he has of his visit to us. Sir, we are pleased to know that in the highest position in this country we have a man who takes such a vital interest in the West; an interest which I am sure is well deserved. The day will never come when any visitors will be more heartily and gladly welcomed within the borders of Saskatchewan and Alberta than will be His Excellency and his gracious partner in life whenever they wish to honour us with their presence. I have said Sir, that it was a most happy occasion. There was harmony and peace on that early September day, but I am sorry to say that that harmony was soon rudely broken.

I am sorry to have to say, Sir, that scarcely had the smoke of that departing train vanished on the horizon of the prairie than men came into our midst to begin a religious agitation; and I am bound to say that this outbreak of bitter religious hatred did not arise among ourselves. It was brought in from the east. We, in the west are not responsible for that. We are capable of looking after our own religious affairs, Mr. Speaker. We worship at our own shrine, use our own prayer book, and teach our children as we wish; and we desire no interference from men in any eastern province. When the day comes that we are in such consummate ignorance that we need their assistance in religious matters, we shall be happy to ask for that assistance. Mr. Speaker, I make no apology for bringing this matter before this House. It is true that it was a provincial election which we were launched upon; but I am sure that all the western members of this House, both Liberal and Conservative, will bear me out in saying that the issues threshed out in that campaign were not

Mr. KNOWLES.

provincial issues, but Dominion issues. The issue was the Autonomy Bills that were passed in this House by the hon. members now present. We heard scarcely a word about provincial politics. We discussed and voted upon the measures called the Alberta Act and the Saskatchewan Act respectively. There were a great many amusing features in that campaign. I never saw a country so full of legal men. I have heard section 91 of the British North America Act learnedly discussed in prairie school houses by men who never held a law book in their hands. I have heard the opinions of Canada's greatest legal lights rudely traversed and these men declared to be in error. I am sorry to have to say that there was a darker side to that campaign. I am sorry to say that in the discussion of the Alberta and Saskatchewan Acts we were called on as Protestants to rise as our forefathers did in the days of old, when the Armada set out to attack the shores of England. We were reminded of the thumb-screw and the rack. It was a campaign of monstrous intolerance. All those who had anything to do with the Dominion government were described everywhere as men banded together to rob the western people of what they held dearest. Agitators came from the east to attack the dearest treasure of a man's soul, his religion, and to use it for the most base and contemptible purposes. Mr. Speaker, I am reflecting on no political party in Canada, I have every respect for a good Liberal, and I have every respect for a good Conservative; but we were up against a thing called the Provincial Rights party, from which may the good Lord ever deliver us. That campaign, however, came to an end, and the ballots were at last taken. The Liberal party has never desired any other tribunal than that of public opinion; it knows no court of appeal other than that of the polling booth, whether in the great cities of the east or on the lonely prairie of the west; and to that tribunal we appealed, into the polling booth we went and out of fifty seats that were contested in the Northwest the Liberals won forty and our opponents ten. Since then we have had by-elections in the constituencies of Saskatchewan and West Assiniboia. In Saskatchewan the Liberal candidate was elected by acclamation, and in West Assiniboia, which I have the honour to represent, the Provincial Rights Association met and the Conservative Association met, and they decided to bring no man into the field. It has been said that the present Liberal government of Saskatchewan won power through the influence of the back townships; but in Western Assiniboia we have the three largest cities, any one of them larger than any other town in Saskatchewan—Regina, Moosejaw and Medicine Hat; and yet our opponents met in convention and decided to put nobody into the