

little excited and not being able to pursue a distinct and logical argument as I intended when I rose to speak.

Mr. J. B. KENNEDY (New Westminster). Mr. Speaker, I rise for a little information, not that I expect to get any from the solon who has just addressed the House. But, the principle has evidently been laid down this afternoon that a province is not represented in this House unless it has a member of the government. In this case it seems to me that there has been a rather gross insult addressed to the ten men who represent these Territories in the House to-day.

Mr. A. B. INGRAM (East Elgin). Mr. Speaker, in the opening remarks of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition this afternoon he referred to the course pursued by the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) when he was leader of the Liberal opposition in this House some years ago. The right hon. gentleman on that occasion drew the attention of this House to certain rumours going the rounds of the newspapers of this country coupled with the fact that His Excellency the Governor General had postponed a trip that he anticipated making. He thought the circumstances sufficient to warrant him in calling the attention of the government of the day to the importance of these rumours. One of the arguments he employed in that case was to the effect that the government was not in the position in which it ought to be before asking parliament to transact the business of the country. He said:

The government, I submit, has no right to ask parliament to vote a single penny under the circumstances.

What circumstances? The circumstances arising from the rumours going around the public press of this country that certain seats in the government were vacant. It seemed to him a remarkable thing that he found some of these seats vacated, vacated by whom? By the representatives of the west? No; the right hon. gentleman seemed to be exercised particularly about the representatives, not of the Northwest Territories, but of the province of Quebec. Why was my hon. friend so much exercised on that occasion? It was not because of any particular or important question brought up in this House on that occasion. In 1895 parliament met on April 18. This matter was brought up by the right hon. gentleman on July 9, and that session closed on July 22, thirteen days after he had given the government notice of the fact that certain ministers had not been in their places the day before. Why was he so much exercised over the fact of these ministers not being properly representative of the province of Quebec? Was it because parliament was liable to vote a penny unwisely in their absence? Every man who knows anything

Mr. LENNOX.

of the political history of this country knows what was taking place at that time; he knows that an issue similar to that which is being discussed to-day was being considered by the people and the government, and it was more due to that fact, I venture to say, that the right hon. gentleman objected to these ministers not being in their places on that particular occasion. My right hon. friend has been asked civilly and often lately by the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) why it is that the position of Minister of the Interior is not filled. The right hon. gentleman rises in his place and says that the leader of the opposition again has another little joke. And what is the little joke? It is not the spending of a small amount of the people's money, but it is the passage of legislation for all time affecting the Northwest Territories, that will involve millions of dollars, and yet the Prime Minister says this is a little joke, and that there is no occasion to have a Minister of the Interior appointed to perform the special duties of that portfolio. The right hon. gentleman has submitted to the House, in the speech from the Throne, this paragraph:

The rapid growth in the population of the Northwest Territories during the past two years justifies the wisdom of conferring on these Territories provincial autonomy. A Bill for that purpose will be submitted for your consideration.

Before I deal with that, let me refer to a rumour or two that we have recently heard, because if the hon. gentleman was justified in those days I am justified to-day in referring to these rumours. A rumour went abroad in this country previous to the 23rd of November last that certain gentlemen met at Three Rivers, in the province of Quebec, and that certain arrangements were entered into by the government with respect to provincial autonomy in the Northwest. Again I say that I cannot understand how the right hon. gentleman and his government placed that paragraph in the speech from the Throne and submitted it to this House, and then come to this House and told us, as members of this House, and told the people of the country, that he had not consulted the Minister of the Interior upon this important plank in the platform in the speech from the Throne. What did the right hon. gentleman say when he introduced this Bill in this House? I shall quote his own words. He said:

How many provinces should be admitted into the confederation coming from the Northwest Territories—one, or two or more? The next question was: in whom should be vested the ownership of the public lands? The third question was: what should be the financial terms to be granted to these new provinces? And the fourth and not the least important by any means was the question of the school system which would be introduced—not introduced, because it was introduced long ago, but should be continued in the Territories.