

turn carried some time ago concerning Port Arthur and Fort William harbours, has not, to my knowledge, been laid on the table yet.

Mr. HYMAN. When the motion for the return reached the department, I gave instructions to the officers to facilitate its preparation in every way. I will make special inquiry again.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Préfontaine) to the fact that out of some twenty returns ordered from his department—two of them having been ordered very recently and the others on different dates between the 25th of January and the 27th of February—only seven have been brought down, leaving eleven that I think ought to have been brought down ere this. It is desirable that we should have them before the hon. gentleman's estimates are more fully discussed.

Hon. RAYMOND PREFONTAINE (Minister of Marine and Fisheries). So many of these returns were asked from the department that my officers, although they have been working at them diligently, have not yet been able to prepare them all; but I will bring them down as fast as I can get them prepared.

SUPPLY—PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance) moved that the House go into committee of Supply.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Carleton, Ont.). Mr. Speaker, before you leave the chair, I take the opportunity of pressing once more upon the attention of the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) the matters which I took occasion to mention yesterday. What he said in reply to my inquiry at that time was very excellent in its way. He cited constitutional authorities as to the course which should be adopted upon the formation of a government and he read certain quotations from a great authority on that question, but none of his remarks touched at all or were even relevant to the real question which I asked. It seems to me that in a matter of this kind the inquiry is one worthy of some attention by the right hon. Prime Minister when it is made in a respectful and serious way, as my inquiry was intended to be. The circumstances are very causal. A measure of the greatest possible importance not only to the Territories of the Northwest which are now being constituted into provinces, but to the country as a whole, is brought to the attention of parliament and the right hon. Prime Minister introduces that measure. When he places that measure before the House he says to the House as emphatically as if he had declared it in express words that the measure had been submitted to, had been con-

Mr. SAM. HUGHES.

sidered by and had met with the approval of every one of his colleagues. That is the situation as I understand it. I have yet to be corrected in that apprehension of my right hon. friend's conduct in introducing this Bill. Well, afterwards it transpires that at least one member of the administration had not considered, and more than that, had not even seen the measure which was brought down by the Prime Minister, and it is an open secret that another member of the administration, then on his way from Europe and expected to arrive in Ottawa within a few days, was not made acquainted with the provisions of the measure as far as we are aware. In making that statement, I am, of course, not making it of my own personal knowledge, and if I am wrong in my conjecture in that regard I shall be glad to be corrected. But the importance of the situation is this, that the two hon. gentlemen to whom I have referred were gentlemen who had allied themselves with the right hon. gentleman in 1895 and 1896 in regard to a very similar question. The hon. ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), in 1895 and in 1896, used language in regard to one of the questions embraced in this measure, language which I have under my hand, but which I shall not read to the House to-day because the views of the hon. gentleman are pretty well known. His language was not only of a pronounced, but, in some respects, even of a violent character and it would do no good to place it before the House to-day. There is no dispute and there never has been any dispute as to the attitude of the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior in that regard. Yet, he is one of the hon. gentlemen who was not made acquainted with the intentions of the government in bringing down this measure. But, there is another hon. gentleman, the hon. Minister of Finance, to whom I have already referred, and in so far as we can gauge the circumstances and in so far as we can learn from the silence of the administration after the statement has been made across the floor of the House, he was also absolutely ignorant of the provisions of the Bill which the right hon. Prime Minister introduced within two or three days of the date when that hon. gentleman expected to return. Now, I have referred to the opinions of the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior. I would like to add also that the opinions of the hon. Minister of Finance, acting as an ally, as the chief of my right hon. friend in the campaign made in Nova Scotia in 1896, although not expressed perhaps in so violent a way as those to which I have just referred of the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior, nevertheless, are of a very pronounced character. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance conducted a very able campaign in support of my right hon. friend in 1896 in the province of Nova Scotia. He was regarded as the leader of the Liberal ranks in that province