

master General (Sir William Mulock). I am sorry my hon. friend the Postmaster General is not in his place because I wished to call his attention to the fact that there is a feeling in the constituency I represent and among my friends that he has not given his full assent to this measure and has reserved his right to withdraw later. I have felt it my duty to bring before the right hon. gentleman and this House what I believe, the right hon. gentleman does not realize, namely, the intense feeling which is being created by this Bill and I appeal to the First Minister not to delay a day in submitting the Bill in its present shape, if he be determined to submit it in that shape. Let us in that event deal with the Bill and fight it out, and perhaps the feeling which is being created in the country and is continuing to spread may then be stopped. Surely from the 21st February until the 15th March is a reasonable length of time to have the Bill before the country, and it ought now to be submitted to the consideration of parliament. Surely that is all the time the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) could possibly have asked for. Every day the feeling is intensifying. Every day the newspapers are instilling more and more into the minds of the people that this is a measure which simply is setting creed against creed. Let us then face the issue straight and squarely. Every day's delay is intensifying the feeling against the Bill, and that feeling has taken such root that I venture to-day that ten years hence will not see the sore healed.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY (Calgary). Representing, as I do, one of the constituencies directly affected by this Bill, I do not see how I can remain silent in this discussion especially in view of some of the remarks which have been made by the right hon. the First Minister. I rise to protest against the conduct of the administration in having framed this measure without any reference to, and in the absence of the minister who is charged by statute with the control and management of the affairs of the Northwest Territories, and for having introduced it in his absence. I may perhaps be permitted to draw the attention of hon. members to the statute to which I refer. By section 3 of chapter 22 of the Revised Statutes of Canada it is provided that the Minister of the Interior shall have the control and management of the affairs of the Northwest Territories. Why then should a measure of such vital importance to the people of that country have been framed and introduced without reference to the minister who has been clothed by statute with this particular duty. That needs explanation. No one can fail to see that there was no member of the cabinet whose presence was more

Mr. OSLER.

necessary before arriving at a conclusion on such an important matter for the west than the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) for there was no minister whose individual responsibility in that matter was so great. It is a matter of common complaint that the affairs of the Northwest Territories can be given only a very small portion of the time which the ministers are able to spare from their respective departments.

That is a complaint that one often hears, and perhaps the reason is plain. There are matters pressing on the different ministers in their departments—matters near at hand—in which they must be more interested than they are in the rights of the people living two or three thousand miles away. That it has been the practice in the past to consult the Minister of the Interior in regard to matters of much less importance regarding the administration of the affairs of the Northwest Territories, I think cannot be denied. Looking at the correspondence which has been had between members of the legislative assembly and the federal government, it will be observed that nearly all that correspondence has been carried on with the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton). I find that on April 5th, 1901, he writes the Hon. F. W. G. Haultain in connection with this matter, saying that business is so pressing upon the respective ministers that the measure could not be brought down that session. Then, again, I find that Mr. Haultain was communicating with the Minister of the Interior over an appointment to discuss affairs relating to the territories with the members of the government, and I find that on June 4th, 1901, the Hon. F. W. G. Haultain wired to Hon. Clifford Sifton:

Can you arrange early meeting for us with sub-committee of Council before ministers disperse for summer? Any time after fifteenth will suit us.

(Sgd.) F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

And in answer to that a wire comes back, dated June 5th, 1901, as follows:

Hon. F. W. G. Haultain,
Regina.

It is impossible to settle date of conference now. Finance Minister must be present. He has gone to England and is not expected back until August.

(Sgd.) CLIFFORD SIFTON.

Apparently there is a variance between the mind of the right hon. First Minister, and even that of the ex-Minister of the Interior, as to the necessity of having the Minister of Finance present at the conference. Following on with that correspondence, I find that on December 7th, 1901, a letter was addressed to the Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier by the Hon. F. W. G. Haultain. In that letter the condition of affairs in the Northwest Territories was fully gone into, and a draft Bill was inclosed setting