

PRIVATE BILLS—EXTENSION OF TIME.

Mr. GALLIHER moved :

That in accordance with the recommendation contained in the 14th report of the Committee on Standing Orders, that portion of the 49th rule which limits the time for receiving petitions for private Bills, be suspended in reference to the petition from the Kaslo and Lardo-Duncan Railway Company, presented this day, and that it be read and received forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST—SCHEDULES TO AUTONOMY BILLS.

On the Orders of the Day being called,

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Carleton, Ont.). Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) when we may expect to have before us the schedules of the Autonomy Bills—Bills Nos. 68 and 69? These Bills refer to schedules, but they have not yet been brought down. In the regular course, they should have accompanied the Bills. Although the Bills have been before us for a very long time, we have not yet seen the schedules.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). I will try to give an answer to my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) early next week.

EASTER ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Carleton, Ont.). I am also requested to inquire whether or not the House will adjourn next Wednesday, as has been the practice during the past two sessions, or whether some other arrangement is contemplated this year. Hon. members desire to know that in order to make their arrangements.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). If my hon. friend will renew his question to-morrow, perhaps I will give him an answer then.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the second reading of Bill (No. 69) to establish and provide for the government of the province of Alberta, and the amendment of Mr. R. L. Borden thereto.

Mr. G. O. ALCORN (Prince Edward). Mr. Speaker, the right hon. First Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), in introducing these Bills to the House, announced that he would, by these measures, crown the present constitutional status of the Northwest Territories with complete and absolute autonomy. I propose very shortly to examine some of the sections or clauses of these Bills with the view of ascertaining how far their provisions promise to carry out that undertaking. In creating new sovereign states it has been

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK.

the practice of the imperial government and, I think of the government of Canada, as the dominant or governing power, to consult and settle with the dependent power whose status is to be dealt with and enlarged the terms and conditions of autonomy, in so far as these terms and conditions are not already fixed and settled as a matter of law. It has not, I think, been the practice of either government to deal with or depart from such terms as are already so fixed, as is proposed to be done in the present case. Instances will readily suggest themselves to the minds of hon. members. Let us take the instance of confederation itself. Every Canadian is well aware that from the time the project of uniting together the scattered provinces of Canada came within the scope of politics there ensued a long period of the most anxious consultation and the fullest exchange of confidences, not only among the provinces as between themselves and their public men, but also between the provinces on the one hand and the imperial authorities on the other. I think that no whisper of suspicion has ever been heard that any of the provinces which intended to cast in their lot in the projected scheme of confederation, or that the views of any public man whose position in any such province entitled him to be heard, were or was in the least degree slighted, or that any person was denied the hearing which he might properly have claimed. I think the same may be said in regard to the subsequent admission of the provinces of Manitoba, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia into the confederacy. Another familiar instance is that of Australia. We all know that the various states now forming the confederacy under the Southern Cross met in consultation, that their voices were heard in that instance, and that no statesman in those states whose position entitled him to a voice in the forming of that union, was denied a hearing. But, Sir, it has remained for this so-called Reform, so-called Liberal administration in Canada, to depart from that principle in the present instance, and to deny consultation to the provinces which are about to cast in their lot with Canada. In this case there has been practically no consultation with the Territories. Beyond question, neither the people of these Territories, nor the people of Canada at large, have had the slightest opportunity of making their voices heard at the polls, where they should have been consulted. The whole matter appears to have been practically settled by the right hon. First Minister through a sub-committee of the Council. Upon that sub-committee there was no representative of the west. The hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton), then Minister of the Interior, was not consulted. We have had this statement made upon the occasion of his explanation of his resignation, when he said that upon his arrival in Ottawa, two days after the presentation of these Bills to the House, he was under the necessity of