

there could be for withholding it and presume there must be some misunderstanding.

Sir WILLIAM MULLOCK. I am afraid that my department is also in fault, but if my hon. friend will be good enough to name the office, concerning which he wants information, I shall have the returns brought down if at all possible and give instructions at once.

Mr. A. MARTIN. The office is Stanhope, and Mr. Lawson was the postmaster dismissed.

Mr. CROCKET. I would like to remind the hon. the Minister of Railways of an order which was passed on the 9th of February for a return of the correspondence in connection with the purchase and taking over of the Canada Eastern Railway. Would the hon. gentleman kindly hurry up the preparation of this return so that we may have it when we meet again after Easter?

Mr. EMMERSON. That return was brought down some time ago. My hon. friend will find that it was laid on the table some weeks ago. It was a return asking for any additional correspondence with respect to the purchase of the Canada Eastern Railway subsequent to the return brought down last session.

Mr. CROCKET. I inquired of the Clerk of Records and was informed that the return had not been brought down.

Mr. EMMERSON. It certainly was brought down, I remember it distinctly.

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. DAVID HENDERSON (Halton). Mr. Speaker, were I to say, on rising to continue the debate on the question before the House and which has been before us for several weeks, that this is one of the most far reaching and important measures we have ever been called to deal with since confederation, I would only be repeating what has been said over and over again by hon. gentlemen who have preceded me. Few of us realize, Mr. Speaker, the vast importance of the question with which we are dealing at present. Few of us realize the vast extent of territory comprised in the two new provinces to which we are now proposing to give a constitution under which they will be best enabled to work out their destiny. An hon. gentleman, a few evenings ago, in referring to this matter, placed it, I must confess, before me in a light I had not realized until then, when he said that each of these

Mr. EMMERSON.

provinces comprises an area of six times as large as the empire state of New York, six times as large as the state of Pennsylvania, so that the two new provinces are equal to twelve times the size of each of those important states of the union. I also find that each of these provinces comprises more area, more square miles, than the German empire or the French republic, so that the two of them together are twice as large as either the empire of Germany or the republic of France. I find further that each of these new provinces will be twice as large as the entire area of Great Britain and Ireland—England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales—so that we are dealing with territories of vast size and importance, and I really do not think that hon. members apprehend the full extent and importance of what we are doing at present.

I desire, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words with reference to the financial terms proposed to be given to the new provinces. I do not intend to enter into the details of this question, because I think they will more properly come up when we consider the resolution which the right hon. the Prime Minister has placed upon the notice paper, and which will be moved at a later stage and afterwards incorporated in these Bills. Possibly that will be the proper time to discuss the financial terms to be given to these provinces, and possibly that may explain why so little has been said in reference to the financial terms on which these provinces are to be admitted into the union. I desire to say that in one respect I do not approve of the mode of providing the means of carrying on the government of those new provinces. Possibly it is something that the Prime Minister could not provide for in any other way, and carry out the proposal made in the Bill. The fathers of confederation were obliged, when confederation was brought about, to recoup the old provinces for the revenues which they lost by reason of their coming into confederation, the revenues which they derived from customs and excise. In order to do that a per capita allowance was made to the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as well as of Ontario and Quebec at the rate of 80 cents a head, based on the population of 1861, and I believe it remains up to the present time at that figure. However, I think the conditions are somewhat different now. We are not obliged to recoup these new provinces for any loss of revenue which they are deriving from customs or excise duty, because practically they have no revenue of themselves from that source, and we are in a position to deal along an entirely different line with these new provinces. I say I do not approve of the plan that was adopted at that time, but I assume the fathers of confederation did what they conceived was for the best, and did perhaps the only possible thing they could do under the circumstances. I believe, however, that