

have an abiding faith in the institutions of my own country.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Carleton, Ont.) Mr. Speaker, it is obviously impossible for the House to discuss in an effective manner at the present stage the Bill which has been introduced by the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). I had hoped that I might have been put in possession of the Bill which has just been introduced, at a sufficiently early date to have enabled me to have made some remarks on it this afternoon, and I realize that one of the colleagues of the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) the Minister of Justice (Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick) had the intention to give me a copy of that Bill last evening. Owing doubtless, to circumstances over which he had no control, I did not receive it until a few minutes before the opening of the House this afternoon, and therefore I will not attempt any discussion of it to-day. Let me say, however, in the very few remarks that I propose to address to the House, that I congratulate the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) upon the change of heart which he has experienced during the past twelve months. Do I understand my right hon. friend to deny that there has been such a change. Let me say that I hold under my hand the 'Hansard' of September 24, 1903, a little more than a year ago, when the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) in debate on this House, pressed upon the attention of the House many reasons, in his opinion very conclusive, why the granting of a provincial status to the Northwest Territories should be delayed for many years, and I am bound to say that every one of those reasons which at that time presented themselves to the right hon. gentleman as insuperable difficulties in the way of immediately granting provincial autonomy, exist to-day just as strongly as they did then. The view which I am presenting to the House at this moment was suggested by my hon. friend from Marquette (Mr. Roche) in these words:

But the Prime Minister adduced arguments that were strong no doubt from this point of view that the Northwest Territories should not be granted local self-government for many years to come.

What was the right hon. gentleman's response to that? Did he deny that that was his opinion at that time? No, he responded to the remarks of the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Roche) by ejaculating across the floor of the House 'hear, hear.' So therefore I have good reason to congratulate the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) upon his change of heart, because when I myself on October 14, 1903, moved in this House a resolution declaring that in the opinion of this House, the time had come when the government

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should take this question into immediate consideration, not one member of the government, not the right hon. gentleman himself, nor one of his colleagues ventured to say one single word upon this all-important subject. They put up in their place two or three gentlemen from the Northwest Territories of Canada to argue as strenuously as they could that the granting of a provincial status should not be accorded to these provinces in the immediate future. The resolution which I moved at that time, after reciting the unanimous resolutions passed by the legislature of the Northwest Territories set forth:

That under the provisions of the British North America Act and amending Acts, the people of the several provinces of Canada enjoy large powers of local self-government committed to and exercised by the executive and legislature of each province.

That the time has arrived when the same powers of local self-government should be granted to the people of the Northwest Territories of Canada and to this end the said representations and prayers contained in the said humble addresses should be taken into immediate consideration and acted upon forthwith.

The only answer from the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues at that time was the answer of contemptuous silence and the putting up, as I have said, of two or three gentlemen from the Northwest Territories to argue that the time had not yet arrived. Well, the right hon. gentleman Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues required a certain stimulus and that came in due course. But one of the arguments, and perhaps as strong an argument as any that was presented to the House on that occasion, was the absence of the Minister of the Interior. It was said that it would be an injustice to the Northwest Territories of Canada to introduce or to attempt to pass through this House a measure of so great importance as that which has been introduced this afternoon unless the government and the House had the benefit of the advice, the experience and the intimate knowledge of that gentleman with regard to conditions in the Northwest Territories of Canada. We all very much regret the indisposition of the Minister of the Interior (Hon. Mr. Sifton). It has unfortunately happened very often that he has been absent from sessions of this parliament, and we have endeavoured to facilitate the passage of his estimates through the House in his absence as much as possible. We all regret his indisposition I am sure, and we trust that in the early future and before any considerable progress is made with this Bill, we shall have in this House the presence of the hon. the Minister of the Interior and the benefit of his views with regard to the measure which has been presented by the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier).

But I said that it required a certain stimulus to the right hon. gentleman to enable