

Mr. U. WILSON. Do you think that will do away with future claims?

Mr. FIELDING. It simplifies the matter. It is better drafting.

Progress reported.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What may we expect on Monday?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The resolutions and then the Bill.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Shall we continue with this measure before the budget is taken up?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes.

Motion agreed to, and House adjourned at 6.05 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, May 8, 1905.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

VACANCY IN THE CABINET.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN (South York). Before the Orders of the Day are called, I intend to draw the attention of the government and of the House to a matter of very great importance, and, in order to put myself within the rules of the House, I intend to conclude with a motion. The right hon. the Prime Minister is no doubt aware of a vacancy in his cabinet; he is also no doubt aware that there is a vacancy in North Oxford, and if he is loyal and true to an old and trusted colleague, there will be in a very short time, or there may already be, for aught I know, a vacancy in the city of London. At the same time the right hon. gentleman is endeavouring to put through this House a constitutional Bill, a Bill which, if once passed, can't be revoked. In a country where there is a constitution as we have in Canada, my idea is that any constitutional amendment of the gravity of the one for autonomy in the west now before the House ought to be submitted to the people in a general election. In the United States, if a great constitutional change is proposed, it must be submitted to all the states for consideration before it can become law; and in countries organized under a constitution such as Switzerland, before a constitutional change can take place, there must be a referendum; and the same custom prevails in a number of other countries where they have written constitutions.

Mr. FIELDING.

Now, in Canada, this Bill proposing great constitutional issues, was brought down to parliament without any intimation to the people at the last general election that such a change was contemplated. In fact, the people were led to believe that no constitutional change was to take place; but immediately the session was opened this Bill was introduced, a Bill that involves a great constitutional issue that to-day is disquieting the country from one end to the other. While I take the broad ground that this question ought first to be submitted to the people of the whole country, I certainly say, in view of the vacancy that has occurred in the cabinet, the vacancy that has occurred in North Oxford, and the vacancy that I think ought to occur in the House, if the right hon. gentleman has confidence in the hon. gentleman who has filled that office now for nearly two years—there ought to be a vacancy in London. In view, then, of these two vacancies, or one vacancy, whichever it may be, I say it is the duty of the right hon. gentleman to cause writs to be issued immediately for that election, or those two elections, in Ontario, and to give the people of Ontario, that province which has been charged by some hon. gentlemen in this House with being an intolerant province a bigoted province, a narrow-minded province—to give the people of that province an opportunity to answer the contention, which, I believe, is held by the Prime Minister, that he has Ontario at his back in this matter; and certainly to give the Postmaster General, the acting Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Customs an opportunity to justify before the people of their province the policy which they are now advocating in this House. Until that is done, I say the hon. gentleman cannot ask that any progress be made in connection with this constitutional Bill now before the House; in fact, I do not think this House will be justified in making any progress whatever, or progress of the most secondary character in a Bill of this kind. But, on the contrary, these vacancies ought to be filled, the writs ought to be issued for the elections, and an appeal ought to be made to the people of Ontario, and then we will know whether those hon. gentlemen are right, or whether their principal organ, the Toronto 'Globe,' is correct in the view which they take of this great constitutional changes which is involved in the school laws of the new provinces. The 'Globe' says it is constitutionally wrong, that it is wrong as a matter of policy, whereas the hon. gentlemen say their policy is right and that they are prepared to justify it in the province of Ontario. Then they must justify it under these circumstances in these constituencies of Ontario, and they must justify it now. If they hold back these elections, the inference will be that they are afraid to discuss their policy in that province. Surely there is no lack of men. I imagine that the