

GODERICH MAIL CONTRACT.

Mr. GUNN asked:

1. Who has the contract for the carrying of mails between the railway station and the post office in the town of Goderich?
2. When was said contract let, and when will it expire?
3. Have tenders been asked for? If so, how many were received?
4. Has the contract been awarded to the lowest tenderer?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM MULOCK (Postmaster General):

1. Thomas Gundry.
2. The contract was let covering the period from the 1st April, 1901, to the 31st March, 1905. On the 24th January last, in order to substitute a new surety for one of the former sureties, a substitute contract was executed for the unexpired period covered by the original contract on the same terms and conditions as in the original contract.
3. (a) Yes. (b) Two.
4. Yes.

SUPPLY—PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance) moved that the House go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Carleton, Ont.). Mr. Speaker, before you leave the chair, I wish to bring an important question to the attention of the House. I had intended to have brought to the attention of the House yesterday, the matter which I am about to mention, but it was not very convenient for the First Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) so I have let the matter stand over until to-day. The subject on which I wish to speak for a few moments concerns certain passages in a letter which the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories has recently addressed to the right hon. gentleman who leads this House (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). In proposing to discuss certain passages in that letter I do not for one moment forget that it is not open for me to-day to discuss the measures which the letter relates and therefore I am touching the letter of Mr. Haultain in so far only as it is concerned with the manner and circumstances in which and under which this Bill was introduced in this House. I assume that Mr. Haultain's letter will be brought down with any other additional correspondence and laid upon the table of the House by the government in due course. In the meantime, however, it has been made public in the press of the country and, without going over what I have already brought to the attention of the government on two occasions last week, may I be permitted at least to say this, that the situation which has developed between

the month of October last and the present time is certainly a very peculiar one. We had this subject, the granting of provincial autonomy to the Northwest Territories discussed to some extent in the year 1901, again in 1902, and again in 1903. On the last occasion I moved a formal resolution in this House in which after setting out resolutions of the legislature of the Northwest Territories to the effect that provincial status should be granted to these Territories. I had submitted to the House that that request should be taken into immediate consideration by the government of this country and should be acted upon forthwith. I pointed out at that time that even if my motion passed, if the government was disposed at once to accept the suggestion which I then made, it would take a considerable time to arrange the details. It was not a matter, as I admitted, to be lightly undertaken or to be disposed of in haste, and it was for that reason that I urged upon the government the immediate consideration of the question, in the month of October, 1903, saying as I did at that time, that if the matter were taken up by the government at once the population of the Northwest Territories of Canada would probably be 500,000 before the details could be arranged and the measure brought down for the consideration of the House and of the country.

Not one member of the administration made any answer to the motion which I brought before the House on that occasion. My hon. friend who now represents the constituency of Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) spoke on that motion. He would not support the resolution for the granting of provincial institutions to the Northwest Territories unless he knew exactly the terms upon which autonomy would be granted. Let me quote his own expressive words:

I, as a representative of the Northwest Territories, do not propose to go into a sort of blind pool, not knowing how we are going to come out when the conclusion has been reached on this very momentous question.

And the member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) spoke on the same subject. If I remember his attitude correctly, on one occasion at least, he was not prepared to have this matter discussed or even considered in the House of Commons unless his leader the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) were present for the purpose of guiding the discussion, as he thought that hon. gentleman's guidance necessary for the protection of the rights of the people of the Northwest Territories. No member of the administration spoke in answer to the motion. The gentlemen to whom I have referred answered for the government; then the division was taken, and the members of the administration stood up and voted solemnly one after the other that the request of the people of the Northwest Territories for provincial status—a request expressed un-