

daries of Ontario and whether, if there be any such correspondence, he will lay it on the table.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I am not aware of any, but if there should be any, there is no objection at all to bringing it down.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT 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. WALTER SCOTT (West Assiniboia) If, Mr. Speaker, the Bills before the House to create the two provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan constitute to representatives from the other parts of Canada the most important measure that has been submitted to parliament since confederation, how much more should their importance be impressed upon one, who, like myself, is entrusted with the duty of representing in this House a very considerable section of the country which it is proposed to form into these new provinces. I may say, Mr. Speaker, in all sincerity that I regret to a very much larger extent to-day than on any former occasion that I am not gifted with that felicity of expression which has distinguished so many of the speakers who have preceded me, and that consequently I shall not be able to embellish the remarks I shall have to present to the House with flowers of oratory such as have adorned many of the speeches we have had on this question.

Of the magnitude of the subject, of course, there can be no question. We are proposing to round out the confederation of half, and probably the richer half of the North American continent, affecting an enormous area of exceptional fertility and capable of sustaining millions, if not tens of millions of people. We are fulfilling the dream of those far-sighted men, the fathers of confederation. We are, once for all, placing upon the half million of people who, at present, constitute the population of these areas and upon the future millions that will constitute that population, the duties of self-government according to free British principles. And we are, at the same time, fixing for all time to come the financial status, setting apart the financial resources, upon which these people shall be enabled to carry on their duties of self-government. We are giving by charter to these new provinces many powers which the people there have been exercising up to the present time, as well as a number of powers, which, until now, have been exercised on their behalf by this parliament. We are proposing to make these people

Mr. BARKER.

fully responsible for their own self-government in the important matters of education, public works and all affairs of internal development which, it may be said, are the most vital, the most constant, and the most intimate affairs affecting the life of the people of any country, and the management of which, it may be said, is so much more difficult in a sparsely-settled country such as these areas are at the present time, than in old communities. Upon the importance of the subject of education there is no occasion for comment here. In my opinion, the House has been, during the present debate, giving more attention to a matter which has developed into an extremely sentimental issue, than to the practical, substantial phase of the education question. I may say that I am more concerned, and I am satisfied that the people that I represent are more concerned, as to whether they are to be enabled by the powers which parliament proposes to confer upon them and the financial resources the House proposes to place at their disposal, for all time to come to keep up an efficient system of education than they are as to the extremely narrow issue which divides the proposition of the government from the proposition of the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden)—no, I beg the pardon of the opposition,—of the hon. member representing the county of Carleton. The matter of local public works, the matter of bridges, the matter of fire guards, the matter of drainage, and in some localities the matter of domestic water supply—these are all affairs of exceeding importance to the people now, and will be of importance to the millions of people who, we expect, will be in that territory in the years to come. And these matters now must be dealt with, and, for a considerable time to come, will have to be dealt with, by the provincial government more than is the case in older communities where these affairs are handled municipally. These are matters which lie at the very root of the existence of a people in a new country and upon these things depend whether the settler in these new provinces is to be encouraged to wage the battle of life under the conditions to be found in that country, or whether he shall labour under disadvantages too great to be borne—as unfortunately, has been the fate of some who went into those Territories in the past, though not, I am glad to say, in the very recent past. The condition of the settlers' land as to drainage; the state of his range,—whether devastated by the prairie fire or properly protected—the existence of a bridge over the creek or river so that the settler may pass over with his team without risking his life at a crossing; the efficiency of his school—upon these matters, I say, depends to a very large extent the whole future of the new provinces which parliament by these