

decision of the question, Is there a western or northern boundary line of Ontario? If we found it, we were to report the fact. We had no authority to make or declare a boundary. With the indulgence of the House, I will take the opportunity to make a few remarks upon the gravity of the question we have to deal with, and upon the objections which have been made to the proposition of the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Dawson) to refer to a Committee of this House the duty of examining and reporting upon this award. In the first place, the extent of territory that is involved, the material interests that are at stake—or rather the control and jurisdiction over these material interests—as well as the political questions involved in the action which this House is invited to take by the hon. gentleman opposite, when he asked us to approve of the award, are too important for off-hand or summary treatment. I have in my hand a report prepared by the Ontario Government, accompanied by a map illustrating the extent of territory, and the importance of the interests from a Provincial point of view that are involved in this question. I will take the liberty of reading a single paragraph which will enable the House to see how important, in the estimation of the Local Government of Ontario, at least, is the question we are now discussing. In mentioning the area of country involved, the compiler of this official document states :

“The district included within these boundaries is of equal if not greater area than the whole of the rest of Ontario, exclusive of the Lakes Ontario, Superior, Huron, and Erie. Omitting those Lakes the Province, within the limits embraced in the proposition of the Dominion, contained about 64,000,000 acres, or 103,000 square miles of territory. From the Quebec boundary line—from Lake Temiscamingue to James Bay—to the Lake of the Woods, the distance cannot be much less than seven hundred miles; while measured from north to south the new territory covers a breadth of country varying from over three hundred to one hundred miles; the Province of Ontario will consequently in future possess an area of fully 200,000 square miles. This is 80,000 square miles greater than the area of the United Kingdom; only 12,000 square miles less than the whole German Empire; only 2,000 square miles less than France, and equal to the combined areas of Holland, Portugal, United Italy, Switzerland and Belgium. The awarded territory alone possesses an area greater by 20,000 square miles than the group of countries just named, excepting Italy.”

MR. MACDOUGALL.

So it will be seen from this short statement, that a very large portion of the earth's surface is waiting the decision of this Parliament with respect to its future municipal and territorial jurisdiction. It cannot be said that such a question ought to be disposed of *per saltum*, by a new Parliament. A large number of the members are new to this question—at least they have not dealt with it as legislators hitherto, or been called upon to investigate or discuss it. I have already found hon. members, well informed on most questions, who say they have not had an opportunity of perusing those documents and voluminous reports, one by the late Minister of the Interior, and another by a distinguished literateur of Toronto, Mr. Lindsey, and another published by the Ontario Government, which deal with the history of the question. If members desire to inform themselves as to the truth and cogency of the statements made by the advocates of the different boundaries proposed, and to pronounce intelligently upon the merits of the case, it will be necessary that some means be adopted to furnish the House with information, and that time be given it to decide. I am not quite convinced that it is not the duty of the Government, in a matter of such gravity as the present, to take the matter into their own hands. I confess I felt the force of the objections made on the other side of the House, against handing over a question like this to a private member, allowing him to take the control of it, and to name the Committee, of which he is to be Chairman. So far as I can judge from the speech of the Minister of Justice, yesterday, and from what has since transpired, the Government do not object to this Committee. If appointed, I think it will be necessary for its members to go over the whole ground already traversed by those concerned in the previous discussions. I think that, the question having remained for nine years since the first Commissioners were appointed, without friendly settlement or final adjudication, it may properly remain a few weeks, or even a few months longer, under investigation, before the Parliament of the Dominion is called upon to make its final judgment in the case. As one of those concerned in the earlier enquiries into the question of our north-western boundaries, and having been