

boundaries on the south; on the north it would cover some hundreds of miles on the shores of Hudson's Bay, and reach on the west, it to the borders of the great prairies. There would, in that case, be something like half a continent in one constituency. Before the award can take effect, however, it requires the sanction of Parliament, but any action on the part of this House cannot reasonably be asked for without the fullest possible information and I know of no way in which that information can be so readily obtained as by means of a Committee empowered to examine witnesses, and send for persons and papers. There has been a great deal of writing about the extent of French Canada, and the claims of the Merchant Adventurers of England trading to Hudson's Bay, but much of it, however valuable in a historical view, is irrelevant as regards the question at issue, and documents, which are of great intrinsic value, are buried in what I may call mountain masses of foreign matter. Only one side of the case has received any considerable degree of attention, and the advocates on that side have culled from these voluminous writings such documents as seem to support their views. They have acted, not as statesmen dealing with a great national question, which, from their high position they might have been expected to do, and should have done, but like retained advocates who do not hesitate to exaggerate the strong and conceal the weak points of their case. They have gone so far as to ignore and set aside Acts of the Imperial Parliament, to distort the evidence afforded by Imperial Proclamations and Commissions to Governors, and, being practically unopposed, have in this way succeeded in obtaining a verdict of which I would say that, however much it might be to their own individual liking is certainly not in the best interests of Ontario or the Dominion at large. This is a case in which all the Provinces are greatly, I may say, equally interested, and in which whatever should conduce most to the general advantage would be most in the interests of Ontario. It is not a case into which party politics should, or I believe can, enter at all. I will not go largely into the merits of the award at present, but I would point out several reasons why I believe it is desirable that this House should be in possession

of more information than it now has, before being called upon to legislate in a matter in reference to which the action to be taken must have a lasting influence for good or ill on the Dominion. In the first place, I would call attention to the fact that, in dealing with the Western Boundaries, the advocates, who alone seem to have had anything to say in the matter, have utterly ignored two Acts of the Imperial Parliament, which, taken in connection with the Imperial Proclamation of 1763, are tolerably clear as to the matter of boundary. I allude to the Act of 1803 (43 Geo. III, cap. 138) and the Act of 1821 (1 and 2 Geo. IV, cap. 66). The first of these Acts describes the Indian Territories as being "not within the limits of the Provinces of Lower or Upper Canada or either of them;" and the next refers to these same territories as being "to the Northward and Westward of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada." The position of the Indian Territories so decidedly specified in these Imperial Acts, as being beyond the limits of Lower or Upper Canada, should have been clearly ascertained and submitted to the Arbitrators before asking them to make an award, as they had no power to go beyond or interfere with lines fixed by Acts of the Imperial Parliament. It may be said that the limits of these Indian Territories were never defined, but the Imperial Proclamation of 1763, to which I have already referred, will throw some light on the subject. It is as follows:—

"And we do further declare it to be our Royal will and pleasure to receive under our Sovereignty, protection and dominion, for the use of the said Indians, all the lands and territories not included within the limits of our three new Governments, or within the limits of the territory granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, as also all the land and territories lying to the westward of the sources of the rivers which fall into the sea from the west and north-west, as aforesaid."

The lines produced by the Arbitrators are drawn without the slightest regard to these Indian Territories or the Imperial Acts of 1803 and 1821; therefore, I believe that their award—if for no other reason—should be received with caution by this House. But there are many other reasons why it should be carefully considered before being accepted, and