

specially charged to examine the situation and resources of that part of the Dominion known as the Great Basin of the Mackenzie; and also, of the report or reports made by such persons, in order to put the Government in a position to decide upon the measures necessary for the protection and development of the Territory.

He said: Although the motion which I have made refers to an important subject, I do not propose to detain the House long at the present time. I brought the subject before the Senate last session, as you will find by reference to the *Debates* of last year. In the month of May, 1890, I made the following motion:—

“That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived to organize that north-western part of the Dominion known as the Great Mackenzie Basin, and the attention of the Government is specially called to the necessity for adopting a scheme for the better protection of its people, its valuable mines, fisheries and hunting grounds.”

When I laid the matter before the House, if I was not able to carry conviction to the minds of all who heard me, at all events they were convinced that the question was one of great importance to the whole Dominion. The Mackenzie Basin is not only vast in its extent, with large stretches of inland navigation, but it possesses the most valuable hunting grounds in the whole world, and I am surprised that action has not yet been taken to develop the natural wealth of that immense country. I understood when the subject was under discussion last year, and I understand to-day that the time perhaps has not yet arrived when a large expenditure should be incurred in the Great Mackenzie Basin. We have abundance of fertile lands more easy of access, which have to be settled, but at the same time it is important that this inheritance of the Dominion should be protected, and I hold the Government responsible for the safe-keeping of that territory for the Dominion. I am afraid that difficulties may arise with our good neighbours to the south of us, and that some expedition may enter into that country by the Yukon, or by the Arctic Sea, or other ways, and take possession. Perhaps if we had fifty men in that country they would be enough to protect it for a while, and would be sufficient to meet any force that would be likely to be encountered. It would be enough to announce to the world that we have got possession of that country and are strong enough to hold it. I was very much satisfied last session to hear the hon. leader of this House express his conviction

and also the opinion of the Government, that something should be done in that country. I will quote his words in reply to my remarks. He assured me that I had the entire sympathy, not only of the House, but of the Government, in my desire to preserve that country for the Dominion, and to take such preliminary steps as might further its ultimate development. He continued:

“During the past year the subject to which my hon. friend refers in his motion has been under the serious and careful consideration of the Government. They have come to the conclusion, to a certain extent in accordance with my hon. friend's motion, that the time has arrived when some steps must be taken toward the object he contemplates, and for that purpose it has been decided that as soon as the weather favours the possibility of doing so a party will be sent to this territory, which will spend the available season there, for the purpose of examining into its position and resources and the condition of its people—of acquiring, in fact, all such information, in an authentic form, as will be needful to enable the Government to decide what steps are necessary for the protection of this territory and to determine what steps they will take for that purpose, and we confidently expect that next session we shall be able to state formally what measures we shall take for the protection and development of this territory.”

In view of this statement, I have no doubt the leader of the House is in a position to say that steps have been taken for the protection of that country, in accordance with the solemn undertaking of last session. No doubt something has been done during the recess: I am satisfied the Government has not remained indifferent to the importance of the matter. I shall simply move for the return called for, and will await the reply of the Government, which I am sure will be satisfactory.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I regret to say that it has not been in the power of the Government to go to the full extent that it would have desired during the past year, in pursuance of the views of my hon. friend and of this House, as expressed last session, but apparently one of the most important objects requiring protection were the mineral deposits, especially the large anthracite coal measures in that region, and the Government early last spring sent a party to that country for the purpose of exploring and examining these deposits and reporting upon them, and upon the measures to be taken for their protection. A report has been received—I am told that it is voluminous; I have not seen it—entering into very full particulars, and that and any other papers referring to the subject