

BOUNDARIES OF ONTARIO.

SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

—FEBRUARY 19th, 1880.—

BY

HON. WM. MACDOUGALL, C.B., M.P.

(From the Official Report of the Debates.)

Mr. MACDOUGALL: The hon. gentleman who has just addressed the House was good enough to make some reference to a recommendation of mine, when I was employed as a Commissioner for the Province of Ontario, to investigate this question of its western and northern boundaries, and to report to that Government the facts, evidence, views and opinions resulting from that investigation. I suppose the hon. gentleman gives me some credit—I took it in a complimentary sense—that, on that occasion I recommended the appointment of a third person to act with the two Commissioners appointed by the respective Governments, whose report might take the form of an award. That is quite true, but in attempting to make that recommendation a cover for, or to commit me in any way to the approval of the award which has been made, the hon. gentleman compels me to say that, if the members of this House will refer to the correspondence published in the Journals of the Local Legislature, they will see that it was not intended, nor did it enter into my mind, that the report of the Commissioners should be a definitive award like that which we are now considering. It was to be an examination of the history of the question, a collection of material facts

which might be found pertinent to a 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

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