

charged with the duty of examining and reporting upon them, I have always felt anxious for, and have urged a speedy settlement. The Government of the Dominion in 1871, as well as the Local Government of that day, felt the importance, in view of the administration of justice in the disputed territory, of having it clearly established what authority had jurisdiction in it. The Local Government of Ontario in 1872—a change having taken place, and the member for West Durham having acceded to the Premiership—thought proper to take this question into their own hands, in a spirit wholly different from that which moved those who first undertook to settle it. The case was being investigated, Commissioners had been appointed, one by the Dominion and the other by Ontario; but final instructions had not been given them, and they had never met. It had been part of my duty in connection with the negotiations for the acquisition of the Hudson's Bay Territory, to examine the maps and authorities bearing on this subject. On the resignation of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, and the assumption of office by the hon. member for West Durham, I was called on suddenly to report as to the progress of the Commission. After some correspondence between the Local and Dominion Governments, I was called upon to report my views, opinions and conclusions, with reference to the whole case. In obedience to this pressing demand, I prepared a Report, which you will find in the Sessional Papers of the Local Legislature for 1873, Part 3. It is merely a preliminary paper, setting forth the difficulties of the question, and the different constructions which might be put on the Act of 1774, and referring to the Commissions and Instructions given to the Governors of the Province of Quebec, with other authorities. It states also the conclusions at which I, as an individual, had arrived, after reviewing all those authorities. As soon as that paper came into the possession of the Local Government, I was instructed to cease all operations or proceedings as a Commissioner. In fact, I was very civilly, or, perhaps, I should say, uncivilly, dismissed. I was discharged, at all events, from any further duty or concern in the matter. The member for West Durham took the case into his own hands, as head of

the Local Government, and, after some correspondence, which you will find in the papers published by the Local Legislature, a change of Government took place in the Dominion, the hon. gentleman's political friends acceding to office, and he himself becoming a Minister; and for five years from that period hon. gentlemen opposite, with their political friends in the Local Government, had the question under their control. They had the Dominion Parliament and the Ontario Legislature at their back; the case had reached a certain stage of progress when it fell into their hands, and upon them rests the responsibility for its non-settlement while they remained in power. They did not settle it, although it had been urged previously, on both sides, that a speedy settlement was very desirable, in view of the possible commission of crimes in the disputed territory. Public works were commenced there, under the Administration of the hon. gentleman who now complains of a few weeks delay. The Arbitrators were appointed years ago, and some of them died without having accomplished their mission. In view of these facts, it does not come with very good grace from hon. gentlemen opposite, to press a new Parliament, dealing with this question for the first time, to dispose of it *per saltum*, by a vote, without any enquiry or examination of the different questions connected with it. I believe the majority of the House will take this view, and that the people of Canada will consider that, from the importance of the case, as stated by representatives of Ontario, we ought to enquire into, and carefully consider the question in all its aspects. I have no hesitation in expressing my own opinion that the right of Ontario to claim her boundary in the West, as far as the North-West Angle of the Lake of the Woods, is capable of conclusive demonstration. I do not agree with the Minister of Justice in his strict construction of the Act of 1774. We know now under what circumstances that Act was introduced and how it was dealt with. In 1839 the Report of the Debates on the Quebec Bill was discovered among the Egerton Manuscripts in the British Museum. That report is a very interesting document to the historical student of this country, for it shows the views that prevailed in England as well as in America