

to the said province annually for five years to provide for the construction of necessary public buildings, one-quarter of one per cent on such estimated value, or \$93,750.

He said : I have to inform the House that His Excellency has approved of these resolutions, and consents to their submission to the House.

Motion agreed to.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTHWEST.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister) moved second reading of Bill (No. 69) to establish the government of the province of Alberta.

(Mr. Speaker having put the motion, both Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. R. L. Borden rose at the same time.)

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. If my hon friend wanted simply to put a question, I would certainly give way to him, but if it is his intention to address the chair on this measure, perhaps he will allow me the privilege of a few remarks before he does so.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I took it for granted from the right hon. gentleman inclining his head, that he meant he was not going to speak and that I was to go on.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I am glad that this debate is starting in such an auspicious manner and that both sides are apparently in very good humor and in a very good frame of mind for the discussion. When some time ago I presented this Bill to the House, I stated that there were certain questions connected with it which were of paramount importance and which in fact were the essence of the whole measure. The first was the number of provinces to be created ; the second was the ownership of the land ; the third was the financial terms to be granted ; and the last was the education system. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden) rose immediately after me, but confined his remarks for the moment to two of those questions only—the ownership of the lands and the school question. With regard to the ownership of the land, my hon. friend re-asserted the position he had often maintained on the floor of this House as elsewhere, namely, that the land should go to the provinces to be owned and managed by them. On the school question my hon. friend was reserved. He did not announce any policy, but very wisely said that, in his judgment, the subject was one which ought to be approached with calm and moderation. The press which follows and supports my hon. friend took, notwithstanding this advice of his, a very different attitude. On the land question it said very little, if it said anything at all, but upon the school question it offered a very violent opposition. Perhaps I may not be out of

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

the way in saying that the press which supports my hon. friend has spared no effort to inflame the public mind upon an ever delicate subject.

In the course of the years I have been in this House, many have been the occasions in which parliament has had to face and to solve questions, simple enough in themselves, but complicated and rendered difficult by sudden outbursts of passion. And here again I may repeat what I had the opportunity of saying some few days ago, that in using this word 'passion,' I do not want to convey any offensive sense. I recognize, we all recognize, that passions are very often the outgrowth of noble sentiment ; but let this sentiment be ever so meritorious, if it goes beyond a certain line, it may become blind, unthinking, unreasoning passion. In 1875 on the New Brunswick school question, in 1889 on the Jesuit Estates questions, in 1896 on the Manitoba school question, several parts of the country—now one part, now another—were roused to a high pitch of excitement.

Since my conduct on the present occasion has been assailed, perhaps I may be pardoned if I refer for one moment to myself, and say that upon every one of these questions, I have endeavoured, so far as I know—and successfully I think—to act on the very principle of the constitution under which we live. In 1875, being then a young man, I supported the government of Mr. Mackenzie which refused to interfere with certain legislation passed by the legislature of the provinces of Quebec of which the Roman Catholic minority complained. That minority complained that this legislation was an invasion of their rights and forced an intolerable burden upon them. But, as it was established that at the time of confederation New Brunswick had no system of separate schools, it followed as a consequence that this parliament had no jurisdiction in the matter, and the government of Mr. Mackenzie, very properly, I think, refused to interfere and disallow that Act it was asked to disallow. In 1889, having become leader of the party to which I belong, I supported the government of Sir John Macdonald when they refused to accede to the request of a section of our fellow countrymen to disallow the Act of the legislature of the province of Quebec to settle what was known as the Jesuit Estates question. In 1896, I opposed the government of Sir Mackenzie Bowell when they endeavoured to force upon the province of Manitoba a system of schools which, according to high judicial authority, the province of Manitoba had a right to reject and which it had rejected by action within the scope of its legitimate authority. And in this year, 1905, when two provinces are to be brought into the Dominion, in which provinces there is a system of separate schools such as we have in the province of Quebec and Ontario, I stand again, as I believe, upon the rock of the constitution of Canada when