

not hesitate to pledge the credit of the country to what was then considered a huge amount of money—but which has since been found to be but a trifling sum—in order to secure for Canada that great lone land, known only in those days from the early pioneers, from the missionaries, from the voyageurs and the trappers of the Hudson Bay Company.

Sir, the more we study the history of confederation the more we appreciate the spirit which guided its fathers. They were nation-builders, the men who sat at the conference of Quebec. Their vision of the future extended much beyond the union of the four original provinces. They foresaw that, in the years to come, the existence of a great Canadian nation under the ægis of British monarchical institutions was not only a dream, but a striking reality; aye, even by the side of by far the greatest of all modern and ancient republics.

Before I proceed any further, let me express the hope that the day is not far distant when the last link will be added to the chain of Canadian provinces by the entry of Newfoundland into confederation. More so, now that the vexed French shore dispute has been settled between England and France. It seems to me that nothing stands in the way to prevent the union of Newfoundland with the Dominion on fair terms. The public men of both countries would indeed be remiss to their duty if they did not grapple and overcome the objections or the difficulties which have been raised in the past whenever the question was brought up for discussion.

As I said, a moment ago, the granting of autonomy to the Northwest Territories has been received with favour by the country at large. Long ago, it was felt, that if ever the tide of immigration would turn our way it would never recede. The tide is on us—more especially since the last five or six years—and from all parts of the world, immigration is pouring so to say, towards the new promised land of western Canada. With a population of half a million inhabitants; with the expectation of doubling that figure before many years have elapsed; having fairly passed the period of infancy, it was but just and fair that the Northwest Territories should be given the full control of their local government.

I insist however on two points: 1. The Northwest Territories have been acquired by Canada,—they are our creation; 2. Whilst in the case of Canada, the constitution was framed by the imperial parliament, in the present instance, with regard to the Northwest Territories, their constitution is framed by the Canadian parliament. It seems to me that at this stage of the debate, it is well to bear in mind those two peculiar features of the situation. Though not eternal, constitutions are not by any means of a transitory nature. They are framed to be permanent—as permanent as human institutions can possibly be. I

therefore quite understand the keen and lively interest which the two Bills now under consideration, have aroused from one end of the country to the other. I less understand, however, the sentiment of bitterness which, of latter days, they have so intensely developed.

Sir, I do not intend to discuss the several clauses contained in the Bill. The masterly effort of the right hon. the leader of the House, when he introduced this measure, has made our task an easy one indeed—I will confine myself to the land question and the school question.

I wish, however, before taking up those two features of the Bill, to say a word or two concerning the division of the Northwest Territories into two provinces. This is one of Mr. Haultain's grievances—but from all appearances, it seems to be a personal grievance. Is it because, as future premier of one of the provinces, he will command less influence? That, I would not venture to say. But be it a personal grievance or not, the fact remains that the division of the Northwest Territories into two provinces is in accord with public opinion all over Canada. Sir, we are legislating for the future whilst Mr. Haultain—if his views on this question were adopted—would bind us to the present only. Moreover, we live in a confederation. Should not the history of other confederacies be an object lesson to us? The danger may be remote, but do you not agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that by carving two provinces out of that immense western territory, the balance of power is more equally, more equitably distributed as among all the others? At the time of the first republic of France, a great orator, Vergniaud, said of the French revolution that it resembled Saturn devouring his own progeny. Sir, I am not a pessimist, but I fear that the very reverse would likely happen, if we did create one huge province extending from Manitoba to the Rockies; in this instance the child abnormally overgrown, would soon devour his father.

The hon. gentlemen opposite and the Conservative press throughout the Dominion, have been very loud in their protests against the clause of the Bill which vests in the Dominion the property of the public lands in the Northwest Territories. 'Why is the west deprived of its birthright?' is the question put by those who, by all means, are bound to find fault with this measure. 'Why not treat the west as well as the other provinces?' Sir, such appeals may perhaps stir up the feelings of those who do not know under what peculiar and exceptional circumstances the Northwest Territories entered confederation. But surely, they cannot and will not bias the judgment of any of the hon. gentlemen who sit in this House. True it is, that the British North America Act stipulates that each province