

ritories and see what the verdict of the people will be.

The right hon. gentleman said: 'We have had the benefit of the presence of Mr. Haultain and Mr. Bulyea,' and he went on to say further: 'We have had the advantage of the advice of several members from the Territories in the discussion of these Bills.' Now, as has been pointed out this afternoon, Mr. Haultain at any rate has put himself definitely on record as objecting to the terms of the draft Bill. And I may say that Mr. Haultain and Mr. Bulyea do not speak as private individuals; they speak as being armed with the authority of the accredited representatives of the government and the legislative assembly of the Northwest Territories. And it must be remembered that the claims of the Northwest Territories were set forth in the most distinct and definite terms—were set forth categorically—in a draft Bill which the premier of the Northwest Territories submitted to the Prime Minister more than three years ago. Those terms were discussed in the legislative assembly, and were for all practical purposes unanimously approved. I may say that there was a unanimous approval of the various terms of that draft Bill, with just one exception: that was as to whether there should be one or two provinces. On that question the majority—

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. member is again commencing to get very close to a discussion of the Bill on the order paper.

Mr. LAKE. I was endeavouring, Mr. Speaker, to answer a remark which was made by the Prime Minister himself; but I will get at it more directly. The Prime Minister made a strong point of the fact that Mr. Haultain had objected to two provinces being formed. That made a large part of his argument, and surely I should be allowed to say a few words in reference to that. What I wish to point out is this, that a very large majority of the members of the legislative assembly were in favour of one province. There was a small minority in favour of two provinces, but they were divided in opinion as to how these two provinces should be formed—whether there should be a northern one and a southern one or an eastern one and a western one. Mr. Haultain was only doing his duty when he advocated what was the very strong verdict of the members of the legislative assembly. When the right hon. gentleman referred to the immense province which such an area would make, I think he forgot that the legislative assembly had not asked for the immense area which he now proposes to include in the two new provinces. They had only asked for a portion of it; and I might suggest to him that the three present organized districts only include an area less than that of British Columbia or that of Quebec.

Mr. LAKE.

I may say further that the terms of this draft Bill formed the principal question in the general election of the Northwest Territories which took place shortly after its submission to the legislative assembly; and that the principal campaign literature issued by the local government of that day was the correspondence in connection with the draft Bill, and the draft Bill itself, so that there can be no question, seeing that Mr. Haultain's government was returned to power with an overwhelming majority, that he was voicing the opinion of the people of the Northwest in the demands which he has made in regard to the terms upon which the Northwest Territories were to become provinces. But, as the right hon. the Prime Minister says, he had discussed this question and had great advantage in the discussion not only with the representatives of the Territorial government, but also with several western members, we must presume that the Bill was introduced with the concurrence of these western members. We must assume that, or else these remarks of the Prime Minister would have no significance or meaning. I noticed also that some Northwest members on the other side of the House greeted the remarks of the Prime Minister on that occasion with the most vigorous applause.

Again I say that I consider that the presence of the Minister of the Interior in this House is most necessary. A proposal is made in these draft Bills that the Dominion government should remain in possession of the public lands of the Northwest. I venture to assert that it has been found impossible in the past to administer the lands of that country, with satisfaction, from Ottawa and I think that if a close inquiry were made into the conditions it would be found that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in that country with the proclaimed policy of the Minister of the Interior with reference to the settlement of these lands, and that the administration of these lands is not satisfactory to the people of the Northwest. This House should have the fullest information on these points, and I apprehend that it would be practically impossible to get that full information unless we have, sitting in his seat on the other side of the House, a Minister of the Interior.

Mr. W. J. ROCHE (Marquette). Mr. Speaker, as a western representative, I desire for a very short time this afternoon to discuss more particularly one feature of this debate that has been referred to, especially by my colleagues from the west, a question in which we are particularly interested in common with the people who reside in that portion of Canada. I refer to the vacancy which exists in the portfolio of the Minister of the Interior. Some two or three years ago when the territorial executive consulted with the right hon. gentleman as to whether he was willing and ready to