

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. My hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake) has given the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) a very hard nut to crack and I must say that the right hon. gentleman has not made much impression upon it.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. This is not the time to crack it. We will crack it in due time.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. In July?

An hon. MEMBER. 'In due time.'

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Oh, in due time. I did not know but that the right hon. gentleman had a preference for a summer session. The Prime Minister has already practically admitted that a statement made by a member of this House in the constituency of Mountain, in the province of Manitoba, embodied a decision which would be accepted by the government. And that statement, speaking from recollection, was that a portion of the territory not yet appropriated would be divided in this way; the line would run, I think from the north-east boundary of Manitoba, or some point near there, up Churchill river to Fort Churchill, then down the coast of Hudson bay to Weenisk river to Weenisk lake, then to Fishing lake at the boundary of the province of Ontario and thence south to the 49th parallel. This was to be the new boundary of the province of Manitoba. The portion of the land to the north and west would go to Saskatchewan and the portion to the east would go to Ontario. That division, as not only one but two hon. members of the House stated, and as practically the Prime Minister has said would be adopted. The question that the hon. member for Qu'Appelle asks is this: Having decided upon that course, you must have come to some conclusion whether you will or will not, in that portion of the territory to be handed over to Ontario, carry out exactly the same policy which you are carrying out with respect to these new provinces. In other words: You will add to the province of Ontario 20,000 or 40,000 square miles of territory. Will you reserve the public domain, in these lands to this government, or will that domain pass over to be administered by the province of Ontario as other provincial lands of Ontario are administered? If you do hand this public domain over to Ontario, will or will you not adopt the same principle with regard to Manitoba? And, if you carry out the policy of transferring the public domain to these two provinces, how shall you make any exception in the case of the province of Saskatchewan? And, if you carry out that policy in the province of Saskatchewan in regard to the added territory, what reason can possibly be given for withholding the lands in the remainder of the province? It seems a very logical sequence, and I should think

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

it could afford some room for reflection by the government. I assume that practically the government will get out of it by not handing over any land to Ontario. And thus that fine province may find itself divested of a certain amount of territory because a difficulty arises through the inconsistent conduct of the government.

Now, there is one matter I wish to bring to the attention of the member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott). It relates to the hon. gentleman's attitude toward provincial autonomy. I have a little reference to some remarks of his. He referred to a certain proposal I made which was mentioned this afternoon. I said, in the first place, that I thought the lands ought to be handed over to the control and administration of the provinces, I adverted to the arguments of the Prime Minister that that would be dangerous to the immigration policy of the government. I thought there should be no such danger, but I suggested that if the government were of opinion that there was such a danger, they might hand over the land of the province on certain stipulations with regard to free-homesteads, to which the consent of the people of the Northwest Territories would be obtained. On this point the hon. member for Western Assiniboia said:

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that I am amazed that any man in this House should give voice to such a suggestion for invasion of provincial autonomy as is contained in the suggestion of my hon. friend.

As I understand him, in his opinion it is an invasion of provincial autonomy to hand these lands over to the province under any restriction whatever even though the consent of the people of the Territories, through their representatives, were obtained—

Mr. SCOTT. Certainly.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN—but he regards it not as an invasion of provincial autonomy to refuse to hand over any portion of the lands, but to retain them all in the possession of the Dominion government. That would seem to me a little inconsistent.

Mr. SCOTT. I may be permitted to say that when I made that reference to the suggestion of my hon. friend I was taking for the moment his point of view with regard to autonomy. He was taking the view that we must lay out the new provinces upon exactly the same basis as that on which the four original provinces entered confederation. For instance, they must be dealt with in a certain way with regard to education. He had a particular view in that matter. They must be dealt with so and so with regard to the lands, and in every particular, if I understood my hon. friend aright, it was his view that this parliament was not free to deal as it chose, but it must follow strictly certain lines which are laid down in the British North