

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROROGUED

A SEVEN WEEKS' SESSION BROUGHT TO A CLOSE YESTERDAY.

Synopsis of Proceedings of the Last Week of Session—Unanimous Expression Against Mutilation of the Boundaries—Jubilee Address—Question of Jurisdiction in Yukon—New Brand Law—Important Municipal Amendments—Variety of Legislation.

THURSDAY, Dec. 9, 1897.

Report was presented from select committees appointed to redraft Rules of Proceedings of the House, and Rules for government of the Library.

RESOLVE THE BOUNDARIES.
Mr. GILBERT, moved by Mr. Dill, moved That in the opinion of this House, the North-West Territories as they are at present composed should be maintained intact for administrative purposes until the time has arrived for their entrance into consideration as a province.

The mover said the subject had already been pretty fully discussed, and he had been well pleased with Mr. Hallahan's reference to it on Monday. It was possible that they attached too much importance to the suggestion made by the Premier of Manitoba last year with reference to extending the bounds of Manitoba. It might be said, too, that the subject had dropped. Still he was of opinion that it was important that the Assembly should with all its might denounce any proposal to cut into the boundaries of the Territories. When Mr. Greenway's suggestion was made, the people of Eastern Assiniboia freely expressed their opinion. If any more had been made to carry out the suggestion, he should not wish to be responsible for what might have occurred. They knew that did occur once in a while over the proposed removal of a land office, and he believed one of the Members of the House (Mr. McCawley) took prominent and successful action in that connection. If any hon. Member would visit Eastern Assiniboia he would find that there was a strong feeling of the people on this question. He was satisfied that if any more had been made, our own Executive would have taken energetic measures so far as lay in their power to oppose it. Probably the Government had been wise, as no more was made, to ignore the suggestion. He said that great credit was due the great Territories, particularly the Regina "Leader" and "Morning Spectator," as well as to certain private individuals, for the way they had discussed and opposed the proposition to allow Manitoba to take a valuable portion of the Territories; and it was, he believed, in no small measure due to their efforts and energy that the suggestion was nipped in the bud. There could not be the slightest doubt that the Premier of Manitoba had been sincere in his wish to annex a portion of the Territories. In some quarters in the east it was urged that this country was too large for a province. That argument was perfectly absurd, as the size and distances of Ontario proved. He made the motion to give force to the arguments that had been put forth in behalf of the preservation of our boundaries and to demonstrate to everybody interested that the people of the Territories will not agree to give away an inch of territory. We want it all—become the most powerful and most prosperous province of the Dominion. It was not necessary then to go into a question of provincial establishment. That point, as the Premier had stated, depended upon whether the Federal authorities granted as much money to carry on our business without becoming a province. We should not seek full provincial responsibilities until every means had been exhausted to get proper recognition without it. It may be that progress is not as rapid as we would wish, yet our affairs are being managed economically and in the best interests of the people, and it was well to get safe and sure foundations laid before commencing the superstructure. He did not expect a long debate but would like to hear the Members express themselves on the subject.

In reply to a question by Mr. Maloney, the Attorney-General stated that, by the definition of the North-West Act, the North-West Territories embrace the country right to the North Pole, including Yukon.

Mr. PATRICK said that some years ago when an election in Ontario, when an attempt was made to interfere with the western boundary of that province. The people of Ontario were respected, and the position was maintained that their boundaries should not be changed against their wish. Later he removed the Territories with the purpose of making a home here, and he was under the impression that by removal he had forfeited no right as an elector, that he had possessed when in Ontario. The people here possessed the same right to have their wishes respected, and if any change is to be made, our consent must be gained. He well understood that certain rights of the Territories were held in abeyance by the Federal authorities—but no right was forfeited. The Dominion held the legal power in the matter of our boundaries, just as the Imperial authorities have the legal right to deprive the Dominion of Canada of any right held by virtue of Imperial Statute. But it was not a question of legality; it was a question of policy—a question of expediency and of moral right. He asserted the right of the people of the Territories to have the boundaries of the country remain intact until they consented to alteration.

Mr. EAKIN said the question was a live one in his district within the past year, and after Mr. Jernsey's speech at Brandon the people were much excited and alarmed. Those residing nearest to the Manitoba boundary were the most strenuously opposed to the proposal of annexation, because they knew best the burden of the people of Manitoba. The fact that Manitoba was repeatedly asking for larger subsidy showed that the province was not in satisfactory condition.

The boundary had once been extended into the Territories, at a time when the people were sparse, and there was no doubt that Manitoba would like to secure another extension to procure another section of the very best agricultural land in Canada. He (Mr. Eakin) had written to Mr. Douglas, M.P., on the subject, who returned reply that the Minister of Interior (Mr. Sifton) stated that no such change would be contemplated unless a majority of the people wished it. He could say that he had never met a single ratepayer who favored joining Manitoba.

Mr. HARTMAN said that for the discussion which had taken place, both then and on a previous day, it was not necessary for him to say more than simply that the resolution had his hearty support. It expressed precisely what he had said on Monday, and he hoped it would have weight as being the opinion of the House, even if the question was not a live one at present. He hoped it would not become a live question.

Dr. BRETZ questioned the advisability of committing the House to the important principle of one province. That was not a question which had come prominently before the people, and had not been discussed by the people. He would regret to see any portion of the Territories taken away, but pointed out that to take in the whole north country would make an exceedingly large province. He noticed a resolution in the resolution to "administrative purposes," and said he would like to know just to what extent we were extending jurisdiction in the unorganized districts. He moved, seconded by Mr. Bannerman, to insert the words "or province" in the resolution, which, he said, would not impair its force.

Mr. BANNERMANN said there was quite as strong feeling in Alberta, at least in Calgary, against being tacked on to East Assiniboia, as there was in East Assiniboia against being tacked on to Manitoba. He did not like motions to be sprung on the House in the way that this one was. The question should be discussed as a general election campaign to ascertain the feeling of the people.

Mr. AGNEW thought with Mr. Bannerman that the feeling of the people was not well enough known to enable the House to express an opinion on the question of provinces—whether there should be one or more. The people in Saskatchewan were not at all on the subject. Personally he was against Manitoba taking any of our territory. He suggested to strike the words "as a province" in the resolution.

Mr. ROSS said the hon. Member for Whitecourt, he thought might be well congratulated upon his resolution. There was no doubt that in the eastern part of the Territories there was very strong feeling in opposition to the suggestion made some time ago by the Premier of Manitoba. That the people of Manitoba should want to take a portion of this country, that was natural. Manitoba was a small province, and unfortunately had made a very bad bargain in what was known as the Better Terms agreement. The people conducting the affairs of that province, he believed, were not so desirous of getting more territory, as they were to get opportunity to make a new deal with the Dominion. To make new terms, they would have to show new conditions. If they did an extension of territory, they would probably be enabled to make a new deal. He would sympathize with Manitoba, but he did not think it right to give out territory. Manitoba could not be desired the change, but he (Mr. Ross) did not think the change would ever be made. In fact it would not be to the political interest of the men in power in Manitoba to take in a portion of East Assiniboia against the wish of the people. In place of the scale of opposition they have now, they would find that the representatives sent by the annexed portion would oppose the Government to a man. No man could be elected in the annexed territory to support any man instrumental in having their territory withdrawn and given to Manitoba. The Federal authorities would think well before taking such a step. They too, at times had to reckon with and appeal to the people, and they were not likely to appeal with success if they got against the wish of a large number of people. No matter what was the political complexion of the people, the people of the North-West Territories would disapprove by votes of any such action as involved the Manitoba Premier's suggestion. Another point which would tend to do away with any Federal desire in this direction, was the fact that Manitoba of late had not been a very happy family; certain people there believed they had not been fairly treated, and there would be objection on the part of people not residents of the Territories, to the extension scheme. The hon. Member for Banff was fearful that the House would give any expression in favor of one province. He had two provinces on the brain, and whenever he got a chance never failed to sing in an amendment. They need not discuss this question at this time. The question was as to whether Manitoba should get a portion of our territory. The other question could be discussed by the people when it becomes a live issue. That is one very speedy arrival of the Territories, do not succeed otherwise in obtaining the necessary money to properly carry on the Government. When the time comes they could and would discuss the question of one province or two provinces. Personally he always favored the idea of one province and had yet heard no argument to alter his conviction. It was an erroneous idea that a large province could

be well conducted. With the telegraph lines and railways, he believed the whole country from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains might very well be conducted by one administration. When they looked at Ontario's diversity of interests and resources—timber, minerals, fisheries and agriculture—they surely would see the absurdity of using the argument of diversity of interests against the idea of dividing the Territories into one province, and he hoped he would never hear that argument advanced again. Respecting the statement of the Member for East Calgary that the people there objected to be "tacked on" to Assiniboia, he (Mr. Ross) thought he must be speaking for himself, or for a very limited number of people in Calgary; because he had visited that locality, and talked with people up there, and never found indication of such feeling. He did not believe that Alberta as a whole had any such feeling. There had at one time been a little grumbling at Calgary, and a certain number of men with very large ideas had wanted to have a province formed at once. Their chief idea, judging by their expressions, was that they should gain power to borrow money. In my opinion, said Mr. Ross, these men were not such as it would be desirable to treat with any large borrowing power in behalf of a province. He contended that until such time as the Territories had gained from the Dominion all that we are entitled to, and all that can be expected, they had no right to consider the question of gaining borrowing power. After they had got their rights from Ottawa, and found that they had need to borrow, then and not until then, would they have right to consider it.

Mr. SIMPSON agreed entirely with the resolution, but his own opinion was that, when the time came for provincial action, the eastern portion would be given to Manitoba.

Mr. MEYERS supported the resolution and said the people of his district were strongly opposed to the Manitoba Premier's suggestion.

Mr. OLINICKILL was sorry that for some he was compelled to disagree with Dr. Brett. He said the desirability of one great province was so great that the resolution should clearly contemplate one province, and he would oppose the amendment as indicating that any other possibility was entertained. The diversity of resources was the best argument for a large province. It was the familiar case of the bundle of sticks. Separated they were weak. Joined they were strong. The resolution might leave a doubt as to their wish to have full jurisdiction in the northern portion. They wanted it all—in all the country—Yukon and right up to the pole.

On division only Dr. Brett and Mr. Bannerman voted for the amendment. The resolution was thereupon carried.