

make to the right hon. gentleman who leads the government, and it is this: I find in this clause of the Bill relating to the compensation for lands that such compensation is based upon an estimated acreage and upon a price, and the price put upon that estimated acreage is, I think, \$1.50 an acre. I have no fault to find with the amount which has been decided upon, and which the government proposes to give. I think it is reasonable and liberal, I think it is generous, and I am quite prepared to agree with it. But I submit that the amount should be fixed arbitrarily, it should not be fixed by a reference to the number of millions of acres of land, nor the price per acre. The moment I laid my eyes upon that clause I felt it was a mistake, and I felt that just as soon as it was published the representatives of the Territories would say: You have by this clause admitted that we are entitled to the beneficial ownership of these lands, you have admitted that we are the owners of these lands in fact, beneficially at least if not in law, by the very fact that you are basing the compensation you give us upon the acreage of the provinces. And so within a few days after the Bill was published and before parliament gave assent to it, our good friend Mr. Haultain seized upon this phase of the Bill to present an objection to the right hon. gentleman who leads the government. He immediately took the ground which it must be admitted he could take with some degree of force, that by that provision we admitted, impliedly at least, the right of the Territories to claim that they are the beneficial owners of the land.

What would be the effect? The effect would be that if this passes into a statute it becomes an irrevocable Act because it does become an irrevocable Act as soon as parliament passes it. The effect would be that our friends of the Northwest Territories so soon as they desire to have their financial arrangements re-adjusted will claim that while we have admitted their ownership of the land they have not admitted our valuation of this land and we will find that the Territories as represented on the floor of this House will raise this question of the re-adjustment of the financial arrangements and we will have a question raised that will cause great embarrassment to succeeding governments in the future. I bring this point to the attention of my right hon. friend because I believe we are making a mistake in regard to it. It may perhaps appear to be a matter of detail at the present time but it will not be found to be a matter of detail in future years and it is not too late to remedy it if, in the judgment of the government and of the House, the argument that I address to the House on this subject is correct.

Another point which was raised, espec-

ially by Mr. Haultain, in the letter which he addressed to my right hon. friend the hon. leader of the government, was that respecting legislation, on the subject of irrigation. That is a subject of vast importance in the Northwest Territories, and I must say that I take the responsibility of having, in all probability, induced my colleagues to accept the view which is the effect of the Bill that is before the House; that is to say, that the subject of irrigation for the present should be retained within the control of the federal government. The reasons can be given in a few words and to my mind they are absolutely conclusive. At the present time the right to use some of the principal streams which are of the utmost importance in connection with the irrigation in the Northwest Territories, is a subject of discussion between Canada and the United States and international complications have already arisen in regard to these streams. Obviously, if irrigation were under the administration of two provincial governments, it would be difficult to adjust a question such as that. In addition to that questions are going to arise in a comparatively short time between the residents of the western province and the residents of the eastern province in regard to the right of user of the water of these streams which flow from one into the other. It would seem to me most desirable, until the difficulties respecting international questions and the difficulties respecting interprovincial questions are settled, and until the irrigation system is further developed and a body of law upon the subject is built up, that the control should remain in the hands of the federal government. When a few years have elapsed, when the system is more fully developed, when it becomes a matter merely of local administration then there seems to be no good reason why the subject should not be relegated to the provincial governments.

As I explained a few days ago, the terms of the educational clause of this Bill which was introduced into the House and some of the remarks made by my right hon. friend the leader of the government were the cause of my resigning from the government as a protest against the terms of that clause and the principles to which it was designed to give effect. I have nothing to add to that statement now except to say that while my action was in no sense or nature due to experiencing any feeling of personal pique, yet I did feel, in addition to what I said upon a former occasion, that the right hon. gentleman had not been well advised in bringing this clause to the House of Commons and presenting it to the House without giving me an opportunity of expressing such views as I might desire to offer on the subject. I say I have nothing now to add to what has been said upon that subject and I merely desire, with the