

I may say that I have had a long acquaintance with Mr. Haultain, and I am quite satisfied that he is able to protect himself; and from my more brief acquaintance with the members of the present government, I believe they are able to take their own part, and that we can leave that matter to be settled between them.

The House will bear in mind that Mr. Haultain had submitted a proposition for provincial autonomy to the right hon. gentleman who leads the government, and in that proposition he said he would ask that the lands be retained to the provincial government and the hon. member for Alberta said that he had entire confidence in Mr. Haultain, that he would take care of himself and his provinces. I was a little surprised the other evening when the hon. gentleman addressed the House on these Bills that he should say nothing or almost nothing about the land. It is a well known fact that the gentlemen who have been representing the western constituencies in this House for several years stated in this House on more than one occasion that the lands should be vested in the provincial governments. I shall read from the remarks of Mr. Davis, an hon. gentleman who represented Saskatchewan in the last parliament, but who has now gone to the Senate. At page 13896 of the 'Hansard' 1903, he made this statement:

I have taken the liberty of boiling down the demands, and I think I can give in brief just what Mr. Haultain asks this House to give him, if we are prepared to give provincial autonomy. He wants first all the public lands. The leader of the opposition said he was prepared to support that part of the proposition. I am glad to see that he has approached the matter in that spirit. We in the west would like to see the lands given to the government of the Northwest Territories.

That was the statement of an hon. gentleman who represented a western constituency. We have another statement from an hon. gentleman who represented West Assiniboia in the last parliament and who is also in this parliament (Mr. Scott). Indeed it is said by some Ottawa newspapers, that the hon. gentleman is about to go into the position lately given up by the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) and to become Minister of the Interior in the government. I shall read to the House what he said on this land question, because he has been bubbling over in support of these Bills. On October 13, 1903, at page 13926 of 'Hansard' the hon. member said:

I wish to take occasion to thank the hon. leader of the opposition for the expression of opinion which he gave in favour of the view which we in that country unanimously take, that when a province is formed it is only fair, just and proper that the lands, timber and mineral resources in that province should be handed over to the people dwelling there to be managed and owned by them. This should be done in the Northwest Territories.

MR. BLAIN.

The hon gentleman is now supporting the land clause in the Bill but I am wondering what change has come over the people in his constituency in the west that they would permit him to make a statement of that kind in 1903, and now in 1905 he is saying: Do not give us the lands, leave them with the government in Ottawa, they can take care of them better than we can. I suppose if the hon. gentleman goes into the government and goes back to his constituency for re-election, the electors will take care of that part of the question.

I shall refer for a moment to the debate which took place in this House on March 20, 1896, when the Manitoba school question was up for consideration and the present Postmaster General was dealing with it. He made this statement at page 4189 of 'Hansard.'

There are seven provinces in this Dominion, there is territory out of which to carve many more. There is a minority in every province. Shall we to-day, hastily, thoughtlessly and without due consideration, without first exhausting every other means of settlement, legislate as is proposed by this Bill, and place upon our statute-book a statutory invitation to the minority in every province now existing, and every province that may hereafter be carved out of our territory, to appeal to the people's representatives in this parliament to settle questions that might be better settled, under the spirit of the Confederation Act, by the provinces in which those questions arise. We have been six years dealing with this one issue, six long years, and we are only at the threshold of it yet.

That was a suggestion to the leader of the Conservative government, then in power, to leave Manitoba alone, Manitoba could take care of her own affairs, but now the Postmaster General says: No, we must not leave the new Territories alone, they cannot take care of themselves, we must take care of part of their provincial matters here at Ottawa. I was wondering why this great change in the hon. the Postmaster General. My hon. friend from Labelle made some reference to separate schools, pointing out the splendid educational system in the province of Quebec, a system that, he said, turned out first-class students, who were the pride and admiration of the people of the province of Quebec. I would not venture to put my opinion against that of the hon. gentleman; but I will quote the opinion of a gentleman who occupied a high position in his own province, an opinion which I find quoted in the 'Hansard' of 1896, page 2768. I will read an extract from the report of the Superintendent of Education for that province for the year 1895, as published in the Montreal 'Gazette,' in the year 1895:

The country schools are not as good as they might be. The children leave them without having received a sufficiently lasting impression to make them wish to increase their knowledge. . . . To quote from one inspector's report,