

the last to enter the confederation of the Dominion, and I feel that in granting that autonomy we should do so to the same extent as other provinces have been given their rights and powers. I believe that the word 'autonomy' as mentioned in the Bill should have the significance that is given to it in common parlance and in the dictionaries which define autonomy to mean 'living according to one's own law or mind; self-government.' I desire to view this Bill purely from the standpoint of the legal and constitutional questions involved, and I regret that on this occasion we are called upon to deal with acrimonious questions that were discussed in former days and which we had hoped were set at rest when confederation was formed. I believe it was the intention of the founders of confederation to arrive at a final decision as to what should be the underlying principles, the substrata of the confederation of Canada, and it seems to me that the idea of the public men of that day was that the questions which we are now discussing were then finally settled. In my view the powers which the then provinces were to have, and that all new provinces were to be accorded were laid down in defined and well understood axioms of our constitution. I believe that the educational question which is a very important one was sought to be set at rest by the Confederation Act of 1867, as amended by subsequent Acts. In looking at this Bill from a general standpoint the two most important features of it refer to the control of the lands and question of education. It is my opinion that the public domain of the new provinces should be controlled by those who are to administer the affairs of that country, and I found this opinion largely upon the statements of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie and the Hon. Edward Blake, which were made during the discussion in this parliament when the Northwest Territories were being admitted into the union as Territories, and when the question also arose as to the then proposed admission of Newfoundland. It was proposed that Newfoundland should be given \$150,000 a year in lieu of its lands, and the Hon. Edward Blake is on record as having said:

He was very strongly opposed to the Dominion acquiring the Crown lands of Newfoundland, and he has as strongly objected to Newfoundland being deprived of its Crown lands. He commended the policy of the framers of the constitution in leaving to each of the provinces the control of their own public lands. This was from the Canadian point of view. Then as to Newfoundland the arrangement was equally objectionable: (1) its distance from the seat of government, (2) and its small representation in parliament would lead to an unsatisfactory management.

I think these two reasons exist to-day in regard to the lands, the public domain of the Northwest Territories. Hon. Alexander

Mackenzie went on record shortly afterwards as follows:

There was a difference between the two cases—

That is the case of the Northwest Territories then under consideration and that of Newfoundland—

There was a difference between the two cases. In the Northwest Territories there were at present no constituted authorities as there were in Newfoundland, and it would not be pretended that after a government was established in the Northwest Territories we would administer its lands from Ottawa.

I think that is a very fair statement of the principle that should guide parliament to-day; and I cite the case of my own province of Ontario, in which we exercise actual ownership over the public domain—the land, the timber and the minerals—as do the other provinces. There may be minor reasons why it might be wise to keep the lands under the management of the Dominion; but we are not legislating simply for to-day; we are legislating for all time, and I think all the larger points of advantage are in favour of allowing the public domain to remain in the hands of the provinces and not in the hands of the Dominion. I think that the policy we should pursue in Canada in regard to the administration of the public domain should be the British policy; and the British North America Act lays down in its very first recital that it is intended to establish 'a Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom.' Now, we find that it has been the custom of the imperial authorities, I may safely say at all times, to allow the colonies, be they great or small, after they have ceased to be Crown colonies, and have become entitled to representative government, to retain in their hands the administration of their own affairs with regard to the public domain. We are to-day giving these provinces an indemnity in lieu of their lands; and I venture to say that that is only a matter of guess work. We are giving them what is now considered a fair compensation for depriving them of their lands. That may or may not be an adequate amount in the future. It may work out as a hardship on this parliament, or as a hardship on the Territories, as the case may be. Further, pursuing what I understand to be the policy of the Liberal party, the policy of decentralization, which has always commended itself to my mind, I think it is best to let the local authorities have such power as they are entitled to, and as it is reasonably possible to let them have, so as to prevent congestion at one particular point of interest which may be diverse in character.

Coming to the educational question, I desire to say this at the inception of—that