

ister of Finance if he intends to do anything to prevent the circulation of foreign coin in this country? On a previous occasion I understood the hon. gentleman to say he intended doing something.

Mr. FIELDING. I shall be able to make an announcement in the budget speech.

#### HALF-BREED SCRIP.

Mr. FOSTER. The right hon. gentleman promised to give me some information today.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have conferred with the Minister of Justice, and we are dealing with the matter. We shall select somebody to carry on the investigation.

Mr. FOSTER. Does that go so far as granting the request I made?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I cannot say that. I will tell my hon. friend to-morrow when the Minister of Justice advises me.

#### PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER moved third reading of Bill (No. 69) to establish and provide for the government of the province of Alberta.

Mr. WALTER SCOTT (West Assiniboia). Before this Bill finally passes, I wish to refer at some length to a very important matter of detail, namely, the Canadian Pacific Railway exemption. In committee upon this Bill I proposed an amendment to section 23 and my amendment was as follows:

Provided that the foregoing shall not prejudice the right of the parliament of Canada, by expropriation or otherwise, to obtain the relinquishment by the said company of the company's rights under section 16 of the contract aforesaid.

I am sorry to say that in Committee of the Whole my proposition received very scant attention. The failure of hon. gentlemen opposite to give more attention to it would have been a matter of surprise if any one really thought that these hon. gentlemen were sincere in the talk they have been indulging in for the past five months with regard to provincial autonomy. On the question of education, they have been disturbing the whole of Canada with the exception of the Northwest Territories. They failed, however, to disturb the people of the Northwest Territories on the matter of education and upon the subject they have been seeking to create a disturbance about practically nothing. As a representative of the Territories I tell them here and now that the Bills creating the new provinces are granting to these new provinces, in relation to education, all the

freedom they desire. The Bills leave the provinces free to do exactly as they please in that matter. The Bills leave them free to retain their existing admirable school system, and I think the House and country have been given the most ample proof that what the people of the Territories desire to retain and maintain their present school system. But if any one is seriously concerned in the question of provincial rights he should devote his attention rather to section 23, which concerns the matter of tax exemptions than to section 16 regarding education. In the matter of tax exemptions involved in section 23, the provinces are not left free. If the school districts and municipalities and legislatures were left free to tax the Canadian Pacific Railway, they would without doubt, use that freedom. The failure of members on this side and members of the government to support my proposed amendment was to me a matter both of surprise and regret. In any case I had the right to expect from the government at least a moment's consideration of the proposal and a statement of their reasons for rejecting it, if any good reasons exist. The extremely casual way in which my amendment was rejected in committee may have been due to my own failure to make sufficiently plain my position in the matter, the intrinsic importance of the subject, and why the amendment ought to be adopted. If I fail to make these points plain now, it will not be my fault. To make my meaning plain, I must refer to the autonomy question in a general way. Prior to my first coming to this House in 1901, I was an advocate of immediate autonomy for the Territories. In 1901 and 1902, I urged my opinions in that direction strongly in this House. In March, 1903, the Manitoba courts gave a judgment on certain test tax cases, to which I shall refer later. That judgment was such as to lead me to revise my views as to the desirability of the Territories immediately obtaining autonomy. The Ottawa correspondent of the Winnipeg 'Free Press' obtained interviews upon that judgment from most of the Northwest members. In my statement to that correspondent, I spoke as follows:

As a Northwest citizen I was disappointed last year when autonomy was not granted, but today I am exceedingly thankful that parliament then found it inexpedient to grant our demand. We will now wish for no constitutional change until judgment on the contention raised by Mr. Howell has been obtained from the Privy Council, and if the judgment of the Manitoba court is upheld, then the Northwest before becoming a province will have a very important arrangement to be arrived at with the Canadian Pacific Railway relating to this matter of exemption from taxation.

Towards the end of the 1903 session, the House was called upon to vote on a motion presented by the leader of the opposition