

answer their questions if it is in my power to do so; but it seemed to me that we should not discuss this Bill now, and that when the Bill of which I have given notice comes up we could then fully discuss that.

Mr. SPROULE. I asked two questions, which I respectfully submit were fair: was the government prepared to share in the expense of the betterment of the road and would these come under the Railway Commission, and, if so, how could the Railway Act be made to apply to a railway to which it was not intended to apply. Were not these questions entitled to an answer, and how long would it take to answer them? I say I was not treated with courtesy.

The hour for private bills having expired the Speaker took the chair.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTHWEST.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the second reading of Bill (No. 69), to establish and provide for the government of the province of Alberta, and the amendment of Mr. R. L. Borden thereto.

Mr. URIAH WILSON (Lennox and Addington). Mr. Speaker, the Bill now under discussion is one of the most important measures that have come before this House since I have had the honour of a seat in it, and I feel that it is my duty to have something to say upon it, representing as I do one of the old rural constituencies of the province of Ontario. For many years no Bill has attracted so much public attention as this Bill, perhaps more especially because of the school clause contained in it. But before I come to the school clause, I want to say a few words about the division of the Territory that has been made by the government. In the first place, I think the government, before the last general election, fully intended to divide the Northwest Territories and give them provincial autonomy, and it seems to me that it was their duty to have said something to the public on the subject, so that the public would have had some understanding of the measure, instead of having to go it blind, as they did on that occasion. I am quite sure that if the details of the Bill had been known to the people, there are a good many constituencies both in the province of Ontario and in the western country that would have been very differently represented in this House from what they are now. There was some correspondence, I believe, with Mr. Haultain, the Prime Minister of the Territories, but, so far as I have been able to learn, there was not one word in that correspondence with reference to the details of the Bill, although there was a promise that at this session of parliament a Bill would be introduced granting autonomy to the Northwest provinces. I am not at all disposed

to agree with the government in the division they have made, creating two provinces out of the Northwest Territories and leaving Manitoba with its present area. I think that it is most unfair to the province of Manitoba, which, if left as it is at present, will be crippled for all time to come. Manitoba being the oldest province of that western country ought to exercise its full proportion of influence in the Dominion, which it can never do if it is, as it were, simply a postage stamp on the map of Canada. I have heard accusations made against the government—and I do not like to say harsh things unless I am positive they are true; but a good deal has been said about the course pursued by Manitoba with regard to separate schools having something to do with her not being able to get her territory enlarged. There is no doubt that the province of Manitoba should be enlarged and very greatly enlarged. If the government had considered Manitoba and the Northwest Territories together, and had formed them into two provinces instead of three, it would have been a far better arrangement.

Not only that, but they would not have been unduly large if we had made two provinces of what are now three, or will be after the 1st July, should these Bills carry. The two new provinces contain 500,000 miles, and if we added to them the 73,000 miles that Manitoba contains, that would simply make 573,000 miles altogether. Divide that by two, and you would have two provinces, each with 286,500 miles, as compared with British Columbia, which has 372,620 miles, Quebec, which has 351,873, and Ontario, 260,862 miles. You can easily see, therefore, that if the government had taken into consideration the desirability of having only two provinces instead of three, neither of the two would have been unduly large. Then consider what an amount of money would have been saved by this means. In fact, the complaint in this country for a great many years has been that we have too much government and that our people are paying too much for government. I think it is pretty generally conceded that it would be to the advantage of the maritime provinces to have only one local government instead of three. If that were the case, they would be quite as strong, or even stronger in this House, than they are now, as three separate provinces each with its own administration. When dealing with the Northwest Territories, the government should have had a view to the future and have taken warning by the experience of the maritime provinces. Instead of having the small province of Manitoba and two other large provinces, we could then have two fairly large provinces. But in consequence of the policy of the government, the province of Manitoba will always be inferior to the others.