

THE LEADER.

REGINA, N.W.T., THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 2, 1903

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

LAURIER AND HAULTAIN.

Further Discuss the Question of Autonomy for the Territories.

The correspondence on the subject of granting the provincial status to the Territories which was laid on the table in the Legislature a couple of weeks ago is concluded with the following letters between Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Premier Haultain:

OTTAWA, June 8th, 1903.
Hon. F. W. G. Haultain, Regina.
Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant. The Minister of Finance has, by this time, communicated with you respecting the financial grant to be given to the North-West Legislature. With regard to your further request that legislation be introduced this session conferring on the Territories full provincial organisation, I have had the honour to discuss the matter with the members of the House of Commons from the Territories. I have asked them to consider whether it would be advisable to have such legislation introduced this year. We are, as you know, introducing a redistribution measure at the present session, and we are giving to the Territories a much larger representation in the House of Commons than they would be entitled to were they to become organised at once as a province. In fact the Bill which we have introduced allows to the Territories a representation in the House of Commons of ten members. Were they to be admitted at once as a province, they would be entitled to only six members. It would be a question of extreme difficulty and complications to give to the Territories at the same time all the advantages of full provincial organisation, without the corresponding disadvantages. I have the honour to be, Sir,
Yours truly,
WILFRID LAURIER.

REGINA, June 13, 1903.
The Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G.C.M.G., President Privy Council, Ottawa.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the eighth instant, relating to the question of Provincial institutions in the Territories, and to express regret on the part of the North-West Government that that question has again been put on one side for a reason which seems quite foreign to the subject.

With all deference to the opinion expressed by you, I cannot see that the representation proposed to be given to the Territories under the Redistribution Bill could be in any way affected by the passing of concurrent legislation granting the Provincial status to the Territories.

The provisions of the B.N.A. Act relating to the representation would not, I submit, apply to a Province which, at the earliest, could only come into existence at the same time as the Redistribution Bill became law. Even if legislation creating a Province were introduced at the present session of Parliament, the actual coming into existence of the Province would necessarily be postponed for some months to enable Territorial affairs to be wound up, and thus any question with regard to representation and the effect of the B.N.A. Act would be removed. I might also remind you that upon the admission of British Columbia into the Confederation and upon the creation of the Province of Manitoba, larger representation was given than these two Provinces were respectively entitled to under the B.N.A. Act.

You say that you have discussed the question of Provincial organisation with the Members of the House of Commons from the Territories and have asked them to consider whether it would be advisable to have such legislation introduced this year. Your letter does not make it clear what the opinion of these gentlemen is, but I feel justified in asserting that that opinion was not in accord with the wishes of the people they represent unless it supported the claim made by us which are unanimously endorsed by the North-West Legislature, and were practically unanimously endorsed by the people of the North-West Territories at the general elections in May, 1902. The question of larger representation in the Federal Parliament is without doubt an important one, but the infinitely more urgent question of Provincial organisation should not be subordinated to it. The two questions are quite separate and independent, and cannot, I think I have shown, affect one another. Under any circumstances, however, the obtaining of Provincial powers is in our opinion of much greater importance to the people of the Territories than additional representation in a Parliament whose failure to fulfil the duties and obligations it has assumed with regard to the North-West is one of our strongest reasons for demanding home rule. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
F. W. G. HAULTAIN.