

that referred to by the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy). That hon. gentleman asked the question which has not yet been answered. He wished to know if this territory bordering upon Hudson bay—most of it, I think, comprised in the district of Keewatin—is to be divided amongst the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, will that portion of the territory to be added to Ontario still remain, so far as the possession of the lands is concerned, in the hands of the Dominion government, or will the lands be handed over to the province? And, will a difference be made in that respect between the part of the territory given to Ontario and that given to the new province of Saskatchewan? That is a question to which I would very much like to hear an answer, because I think it has a very clear bearing upon the subject before us. We know that a few years ago a very large amount of territory was handed over to the province of Quebec—116,550 square miles.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I beg the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Lake's) pardon,—nothing was given to Quebec.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. There was a statute passed—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. It was to settle the boundaries.

Mr. LAKE. There seems to be a great divergence of opinion between the right hon. leader of the government (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) and the local government of Quebec, because in the Order in Council which the Quebec government passed, upon which this Act of parliament was subsequently founded, it was stated that the definition of the limits which were proposed by the Quebec government meant an increase in area of 116,550 square miles. There can be no question, even if the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) is right, and it was merely a new definition of the boundary, that it certainly drew the new boundary line far away to the north of the one which existed at that time. In any case, I think we should receive a definite answer on this point. Because only a short time ago, when the Minister of Justice was speaking on the Autonomy Bill, he said that in order to place the public lands of the Northwest Territories in the possession of the new provinces it would require a divesting Act by the parliament of Canada. So far as I have been able to see, there has been no divesting Act in regard, at all events, to that portion of the lands which the government of Quebec believed had been added to that province in 1889.

When we were asking for information this afternoon as to the basis of the calculation of the money grant given in lieu of lands, the information which we got showed us pretty conclusively that it was based upon the idea that 50,000,000 acres of land of the odd numbered sections

are to be opened up and brought within the reach of civilization by the Grand Trunk Pacific. I do not think it can be said that any portion of the present district of Athabaska would come within that scope. I think the whole of the district of Athabaska is really considered by the government to be of little value at the present moment. Would it not be good policy, if the government determines to retain possession of the land in the present provisional districts of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Assiniboia, to hand over the district of Athabaska, at any rate, into the complete possession of the new provinces? I think that would furnish a great incentive to the new provinces to try and open up this district. It seems to me that if a remote district of that sort is placed under the administration of a local government who have no beneficiary interest in the land, it would be a source of expenditure without affording any revenue. The provincial government might find a considerable amount of immigration going into the district of Athabaska, 300 or 400 miles away. These settlers would call loudly for the opening up of new roads and the building of bridges over some of the big rivers, and that would mean taking away a certain amount of money which would otherwise be spent in the more thickly settled districts nearer home. Therefore, it seems to me that the local government would not be very anxious to encourage settlement in the remote districts; whereas, if the lands in those remote districts formed part of the province, the local government would do their utmost to encourage settlement there, because they would be enhancing the value of their own property. For instance if the minerals are in the possession of the Dominion government, the opening up of a new coal mine would bring some money to the Dominion government in the shape of royalty, but it brings no revenue to the local government; in fact, it is a source of expenditure, because the local government has to provide for the inspection of the mine and for the safety of the miners. Therefore, the opening up of an undertaking of that sort is a loss to the local government, although it is a gain to the Dominion government. But if the mines and minerals belonged to the province it would be quite a different proposition for then the local government would be anxious to develop its resources and make a revenue in order to repay for the extra expenditure they would have to make in providing for the inspection of the mine and safeguarding the lives of the miners.

Mr. MORIN. In regard to this question of lands in the new provinces, I cannot understand why the government do not annex those provinces and then give them the milk and the cream, and let them go. What is the use of this government acting as a clerk of the new provinces? Here is the federal government proposing to collect the