

province of Manitoba which I think is entitled to fair consideration. Manitoba has asked to have her territory extended to the shores of Hudson's bay; and this is a prayer which seems to me to be entitled to a fair hearing. The province of Manitoba is not, however, the only one whose territory could be extended towards Hudson's bay. The province of Ontario would have the same right; the province of Quebec would also have that right; and the new province of Saskatchewan also. Therefore, in the project which we have to present to the House to-day, instead of including in the province of Saskatchewan that portion of territory lying north of Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba, we propose to leave that outside, to be included neither in Saskatchewan nor in Manitoba, but to be dealt with at a future day. And I may say at once, and I have the authority of my colleagues to make the announcement, that we propose to invite the province of Ontario, the province of Quebec, the province of Manitoba and the province of Saskatchewan to meet us here to decide whether or not it is advisable that the limits of any of these provinces should be extended to the shores of Hudson's Bay, and if so, in what manner it should be done. We have not considered the matter yet, but perhaps it may not be unadvisable even to consult the other provinces. I venture to think that the proposal which I now make to the House with reference to the province of Manitoba is a fair one, which will commend itself to the approval of all those who have given the matter fair and impartial consideration.

The new provinces shall, as a matter of course, be represented on the floor of this House, and, until another election takes place, they shall continue to be represented as they are to-day. There will be in each province a legislative assembly, of which it is proposed that the number of members shall be twenty-five.

A question which has given some difficulty to the members of the committee who had the preparation of this Bill, has been the selection of the capitals of the respective provinces. As to the capital of the province of Saskatchewan, the difficulty is easily solved, it will be, as it is at present, Regina. But as to the capital of Alberta, the selection was not so easy. There were three claimants for it—Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton, each of which had a good claim. We have decided that we would not make any final selection, leaving the final selection to the province itself. In the meantime, if you look at the map, you will see that Edmonton seems to be the most central point, and therefore we propose to make Edmonton the capital for the present.

Beyond this, I have only to say that it is the intention to have this Bill come into force on July 1 next.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

The point being settled as to the number of provinces to be admitted into confederation, the next question is that regarding the public lands. In whom should the ownership of the lands be vested? Should they belong to the provinces or to the Dominion? A strong plea was presented to us on behalf of the provinces. It was represented that as a matter of law and of equity, the public lands in these two provinces should belong to their governments. This plea was no doubt suggested by the fact that at the time of confederation, all the parties to the original contract, that is to say, the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec, each retained her own lands; and when at a later day the province of British Columbia was admitted to the Dominion, she also retained her lands. But, Sir, the cases are not at all parallel. When the provinces which I have named came into confederation, they were already sovereignities. I use that term, because barring their dependence as colonies they were sovereignities in the sense of having the management of their own affairs. Each had a department of government called the Crown Lands Department, which was entrusted with the power of dealing with those lands, either for revenue or for settlement. But the case of these new provinces is not at all similar. They never had the ownership of the lands. Those lands were bought by the Dominion government, and they have remained ever since the property of the Dominion government, and have been administered by the Dominion government. Therefore I say the two cases are not in any way parallel; they are indeed absolutely different. When the provinces which I have named came into confederation they retained the ownership of their lands; but when the two new provinces come into the Dominion, it cannot be said that they can retain the ownership of their lands, as they never had the ownership.

Therefore, the proposition that in equity and justice these lands belong to the provinces is not tenable. But for my part I would not care, in a question of this importance, to rest the case on a mere abstract proposition. We must view it from the grounds of policy; and from the highest grounds of policy, I think it is advisable that the ownership of these lands should continue to be vested in the Dominion government. We have precedents for this. This is a case in which we can go to the United States for precedents. They are situated very much as we are regarding the ownership of lands and the establishment of new states. Whenever a new state has been created in the American Union, the Federal government has always retained the ownership and management of the public lands. And when we take the records of our own country, we know that when Manitoba was brought into the Dominion, that province was not given the ownership of her lands,