

man gave us to understand he was to have. Now, Sir, I have listened with great attention to all that has been argued on the floor of this House as to the right of these provinces to hold and administer these lands, as they are now administered under the direction of this parliament. But I must confess that I cannot see the cogency of the reasons which hon. gentlemen opposite have brought in support of the policy of refusing to grant the administration of the lands to the provinces. I cannot see in the reasoning of the hon. member for Brandon the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) any sufficient ground for withholding these lands. I fail to see at the outset why, if these provinces are fit for self-government, if they are fit to assume all the responsibilities which appertain to local autonomy they should be deprived of the right to administer their own lands, and should also be restricted in the benefits which would accrue to them from the administration of those lands. If the provinces themselves are not the best judges of the methods by which the lands might be made the most productive and the most fertile sources of improvement, then who would be? Would this parliament be? Can this parliament say for all time that it would be the best dictator as to what policy should be adopted in regard to these lands? There are different policies in regard to different kinds of lands in the Northwest. As I understand there are farming lands, grazing lands and mining lands and a certain small area of timber lands. Different policies have to be enunciated in regard to the administration of these different lands and these policies necessarily have to be changed as time goes on, and as these provinces fill up as they will in the proportion in which they have filled up recently. Where, I ask, would these policies by which these lands are to be administered best be worked out with the autonomy that is to be granted by this Bill and when these Territories have become part of confederation? At Ottawa, the federal capital, by ministers and their deputies and others who are remote, as far as distance is concerned, and who are certainly not as directly in touch with the needs and necessities of the district in which those lands are situated as those on the ground? They would be working, so to speak, in the dark in regard to what is necessary to stimulate the immigration to the west of people who are desirous of inhabiting and cultivating these lands. The primary source of information upon which the department at Ottawa would administer these lands would be furnished through one of the various sources or channels of information; for instance, the agents of the Department of the Interior who are supporters of the policy of this government which might be worked out free from any complication from the provinces. Other channels of information would be the personal investiga-

tion by agents sent direct from here or by agents who are resident upon the ground there. All of these methods would conduce only to the use, or rather to the misuse and maladministration of these lands for the political advancement of the party which was in power at Ottawa and to the detriment of the party in power and the people in these Northwest provinces. Take, for instance, the greed of the land grabber who desires to acquire large blocks of land in the Northwest; he would not have to go to the responsible government in the Northwest, to the government which represented the people in relation to the lands, but he would go to Ottawa. He would go where his political influence could obtain for him large grants of land from the Dominion, which, if the lands were under the control of the provinces the policy of those provinces would prevent him from obtaining. There is also a great advantage to the political parasite in withholding these lands in the Northwest provinces. There will be an opportunity of using these lands for political purposes and of placing the heritage of the Northwest provinces at the disposal of the political birds of prey in power at Ottawa. That is a factor to be considered. We are human and we know that political expedients are resorted to in connection with the administration of these lands. I therefore say that it would be an unwise policy to put it in the power of the government at Ottawa for all time to permit, whether knowingly or unknowingly, their political friends of whatever complexion to use for political purposes the lands which properly belong to the Northwest provinces. There is also the danger that these lands may be used to create trouble, dissention and dissatisfaction among the people of these Northwest provinces. There are instances in which complaints have been made that the ordinary settler, the man who is the pioneer in that country, the man who bears the burden of civilization, has been obliged to pay more for the land which he has obtained than some more favoured individual who has not been subjected to the hardships of the settler's life. There are instances where political influences could be used to the deprivation of the colonist who should, of the most vital necessity, be encouraged. There is then the question to consider as to who should have the administration of these lands. I have seen it stated, and it cannot be denied as a proposition that because the lands in these newly formed provinces are administered from Ottawa, or administered by a government which is not responsible directly to the people, they may suffer from their maladministration. What consequences, may I ask, under the present conditions would result to the Dominion government from the maladministration of these Northwest lands? Supposing that a policy restrictive