

invasion of provincial rights. The present Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) should be the last man in Canada to disregard or ignore provincial rights in carrying on our government. The fathers of confederation, when they were determining what form of government we should have, were compelled, owing to the sentiment of Quebec to favour a federal union rather than a legislative union. Under the federal union the boundaries of provincial rights are clearly marked and held as sacred, while, under a legislative union the provinces would have only such powers as were given them by the central authority. I find the following passage in the life of Sir John A. Macdonald. Speaking of the discussions which took place before confederation was consummated he said :

But, on looking at the subject in the conference, and discussing the matter as we did most unreservedly, with a desire to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, we found that such a system was impracticable.

This refers to a legislative union. And why was it impracticable ?

In the first place, it would not meet the assent of Lower Canada.

And why not ?

Because they felt that, in their peculiar position—being in a minority, with a different language, nationality and religion from the majority—in case of a junction with the other provinces, and their institutions and their laws might be assailed and their ancestral associations, on which they pride themselves, attacked and prejudiced.

And, for that reason, they would not accept a legislative union. So, they secured a federal union, in order that their provincial rights might be maintained. But the Bill now before the House infringes provincial rights, determining in advance the course of action of the new provinces in the Northwest. It deprives these new provinces of the right to manage their own affairs as the older provinces are free to manage theirs. In this respect, the measure does not carry out the principle of confederation. And it comes with doubly bad grace from a Prime Minister who comes from Quebec, a province that insisted upon a form of confederation which would make their provincial rights secure. Now that the rights of his own province are established, the Prime Minister attacks the provincial rights of the new provinces in the west. In view of all this I say we are face to face with a great crisis and there is strong excitement throughout our country. And why ? Because of the outrage upon the feelings and opinions of the people who have no opportunity to help themselves. Should this continue ? I say it should not. I have called attention to the fact that disregard of our constitutional system almost drove one province into revolt, and, if it

is persisted in, it may arouse to revolt the people of the new provinces. The sooner the government place themselves squarely upon the principles of the constitution and give to the Northwest a representative in the cabinet, the better it will be for everybody. We shall then have an opportunity to work out our constitutional system to a success, instead of making it the discouraging failure it undoubtedly will be if this government and their successors set constitutional principles at defiance.

Mr. A. A. STOCKTON (St. John City and County). Mr. Speaker, I think the points made by the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) are well taken. I hope the First Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) will pardon me if I say that I do not think that he met the question asked by the leader of the opposition with the frankness which the circumstances demanded. It will be remembered, that, after the introduction of the Bills which have produced so much discussion in this House, the question was asked of the Prime Minister whether the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) would be back in time for the discussion of these Bills. The First Minister replied that he did not know when the Minister of the Interior would be here, meaning that he did not expect, and did not care whether the Minister of the Interior were here or not, since he, the First Minister, had charge of the Bill.

Now, let me say that the First Minister has not answered the question put by the leader of the opposition except by citing the instances which took place ten, twelve or more years ago. What is the opinion of the First Minister with respect to those instances ? Did he approve of them, or does he approve of them now ? Does he think that citing those instances is a sufficient answer to the question put him by the leader of the opposition ? I would like to know what the opinions of the First Minister are upon those instances. I say, Mr. Speaker, that if there ever was a time in the history of this country when it was necessary that a responsible minister from that Northwest country should be here on the floor of this House, it is to-day. We know that the proposition has been put forward that the ministers represent localities, and that they are to be trusted to a large extent with the administration of affairs in those localities. How stands the matter to-day ? Is there any representative from the great Northwest here to-day to look after the interests of that great country, which is causing so much discussion and occupying so much attention in this House and in the country at large ? Not one, Sir, and so far as any information is given by the First Minister to-day, there will be no representative in the government from the Northwest until after these Bills are passed. Is that fair to the people of that country ?