

introduce legislation at the present session of parliament with a view to granting provincial institutions to the Territories.

In that resolution there is not the slightest word about the draft Bill or any endorsement of its terms. But that is not all. My recollection is—and in this I am speaking from memory only and subject to correction—my recollection is, that when that resolution came before the legislative assembly at Regina, one of the members asked Mr. Haultain if by supporting that resolution they would be committing themselves to the terms of the draft Bill; and my recollection is that Mr. Haultain rose in his place and stated to the House that by passing that resolution the members would not in any way whatever be committing themselves to the terms of the draft Bill, as the resolution merely expressed the regret of the legislature that the Dominion government had not seen fit to deal with the matter. The resolution is undoubtedly evidence that the people of the west desire provincial institutions. The terms of the draft Bill, however, merely express what Mr. Haultain and his government thought it advisable to ask for.

Now, as to the number of provinces provided for in the Bill; I am satisfied that the proposition of the government to divide the Territories of Athabaska, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Assiniboia into two provinces will meet with the general acceptance of the people of the west. There were some, it is true, who thought the Territories should be formed into one province, and there were others who thought there should be three provinces, but those who favoured one province and those who favoured three provinces must recognize the force of the argument which induced the government to adopt the medium course and establish the Territories into two provinces.

It has already been pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that to establish but one province out of the western Territories would be to establish a province which, in its area and in its capacity to sustain population, would so far exceed that possessed by any other province that it would very soon have a prepondering influence in the affairs of the Dominion. On the other hand, it has been shown that to establish a province in each of the districts now comprising the Northwest would be to unnecessarily duplicate the machinery of government. But while the proposition of the government to establish two provinces will meet general acceptance in the west, there is a large number of people, particularly in the district of Saskatchewan, who would have preferred that the dividing line should run east and west instead of north and south. They would have preferred that we should have a northern and a southern province, the northern province comprising the district of Saskatchewan and the northern half of Alberta,

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and the southern province comprising Assiniboia and the southern half of Alberta. Many arguments might be submitted in favour of this proposition. Had this division been followed, each of the provinces would have running through its entire length a national transcontinental line of railway, and the northern province would also have had running through its entire length a great river. *Furthermore, the difficulties which have already been brought to the notice of this House as likely to result from a division of the ranching country would have been avoided. Of course, Mr. Speaker, there are two main objections to the establishment of a northern and a southern province. In the first place, that division would not give nearly as equitable a division of the natural resources of the Territories between the provinces as the present one, and the other objection is that it would not have made provision for the administration of Athabaska, the western portion of which will very shortly be settled. As to the question of the boundary line, if we are to have an eastern and a western province, I do not think any fault can be found with the placing of the boundary line at the fourth meridian. That division leaves the area of the two provinces almost the same and besides it leaves the agricultural lands almost equal in each. It has been estimated by the surveyor general that according to the present division, the agricultural lands in the new province of Saskatchewan will amount to 86,000 square miles, while in the new province of Alberta they will amount to 80,000 square miles, so that there will be in each province practically the same quantity of agricultural land.

Now, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may be permitted to refer to a matter not particularly germane to the question under discussion, but which has been brought to the attention of the House on several occasions, and has been exhaustively dealt with by the hon. gentlemen who preceded me. I refer to the extension of the boundaries of Manitoba. With regard to the extension westward, I agree entirely with my hon. friend from eastern Assiniboia (Mr. Turiff) when he said the other night that the boundary of Manitoba could not be extended westward, so as to include a portion of the Saskatchewan and Assiniboia, without exciting a public agitation and protest the like of which the country has never experienced. I was somewhat surprised at the argument of the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Staples) who contended that the western boundary of Manitoba should be extended. Knowing well the feeling in Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, as the hon. gentleman must, I should think that the hon. gentleman and those who take the same view, would have the same objection to a coercive policy as regards these districts which they had in the past in the case of their own province. Sir, the people