

in regard to these lands, but I do not see what it has to do with the question as to whether the Dominion or the province should carry out such a policy.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I will endeavour to make it plain. I say that the people of the Territories are just as honest, just as capable and just as provident as the people of the rest of Canada; and seeing this thing occurring under their own eyes they would be much more likely to stop it than we seem to have been during the past ten, or fifteen, or twenty years.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not dispute and nobody will dispute that the people of the Territories whether they are represented in this House or in their legislative assemblies are the same, but my hon. friend will agree with me that the argument I gave him this afternoon is unanswerable.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I think it is, but in the very opposite direction.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend does not apprehend the argument; it is this, that if a government, whether it be a local or a federal government, gets in trouble financially, the Dominion government has more resources to fall back upon than a local government; the local government has no resources other than its own lands, and therefore they are more liable to sacrifice these lands to meet an immediate contingency than the Dominion government will be. Let us look at the experience of the past. There is no denying that most of the provincial governments are not at the present time in a very flourishing condition financially; most of them are more or less embarrassed, and moreover I do not think, judging from the past, that my hon. friend has a bright example as to the administration of public lands by the several provinces. Take the neighbouring province of British Columbia. They gave away their domain, they gave away the richest mineral lands they had, the coal lands for a mere song, and when in 1897 the Canadian Pacific Railway came here for a subsidy to assist them to build the Crow's Ness Pass line they already had an enormous subsidy in lands from the British Columbia legislature, an enormous subsidy, so large indeed that before we gave any assistance to the company to build that line, we compelled it to surrender to us 50,000 acres of their best coal lands which we keep as a reserve, so that the people will have under all circumstances the benefit of the coal that is there. We were not satisfied with the reservation of 50,000 acres of coal lands, but, if I remember aright, we also compelled the company to sell their coal at a stated price, which we were sure would prevent any monopoly of those lands, and would have the effect of preventing the very thing

which terrifies my hon. friend from South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean) in his new zeal for provincial rights. That zeal altogether new and only of short duration because I remember only last year he was deprecating the mistake made by Sir John Macdonald in permitting a federal government and in not having a legislative union.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I was pointing out the inconsistency of the right hon. gentleman.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That was last year; now he is a provincial righter and has all the zeal of a new-convert who always goes too far and does not understand the doctrines he is talking about.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The new light that my hon. friend from South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean) has received in this matter is but a feeble glimmer to that which has come to the right hon. gentleman and those on that side of the House. I still do not agree—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I did not expect the hon. gentleman would.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN—with the premier's argument. I did not suppose in his heart that he expected that any one would agree with him because after all his argument does not rest on much. He says that these provinces are likely to be in great stress financially while the Dominion government is always likely to have plenty of money. That may or may not be; we cannot always foretell. I still base my faith upon this that if those lands are of more importance to the province than they are to the Dominion as a whole, and if their people are equally honest and capable, we may expect them to take better care of the public domain than we could possibly do. We surely should not attribute to the people of those provinces so extremely reckless a disposition as to believe that they will sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, simply because of a temporary stringency. That is all the premier's argument amounts to. Some provinces may not have administered their public domain wisely; I am not contending that they always have done so, but has it not been the argument of my right hon. friend and his followers that this Dominion has not always administered the public domain wisely? How often have I heard the changes rung upon that as one of the misdeeds of the Conservatives in the past, and yet my right hon. friend and his colleagues were willing in 1875 to give twice as much land to have the Canadian Pacific Railway built as was eventually given by Sir John Macdonald, so that both political parties in the Dominion of Canada, have not according to the argument made on the other side of the House been guilty of excessive prudence in that re-