

out what the legislative assembly of the Northwest Territories considered they were entitled to claim in dealing with this question. I will not read all the letter, but in part it states :

I have the honour to submit, on behalf of the government of the Territories, the following statement of the present position as it appears to us, together with such remarks as seem to be necessary to properly set forth the reasons which led the assembly to request that inquiries be made and accounts be taken with a view to the establishment of provincial institutions within that portion of the Northwest Territories lying between the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia.

Then, further on in the letter, he says :

After giving some earnest thought to the matter of presenting this part of the subject as desired by the sub-committee of the Privy Council, I have concluded that I cannot do so in any better manner than by submitting the views of the executive council of the Territories in the form of a draft Bill, in which the several points we would like to have brought to an issue are duly set forth, making such comment upon the principles involved as occurs to me in connection with each section or group of sections.

And he concludes :

In conclusion I would venture to express the hope that His Excellency's advisers will, at an early date, arrive at a favourable conclusion to their consideration of the subject matters herein set forth.

(Sgd.) F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

That was written on the 7th December, 1901. On March 15, 1902, when the legislature was about to meet at Regina, a telegram was sent to the Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier as follows :

Legislature opens Thursday. Important that we should know nature of reply to letter of December 7 for reference in speech. Will you kindly have summary wired if possible.

(Sgd.) F. W. G. HAULTAIN.

The answer comes back on March 18, 1902 :

Hon. F. W. G. Haultain,
Regina.

No answer can be sent until the return of Minister of Interior, who is absent through illness.

(Sgd.) WILFRID LAURIER.

The point I desire to make is that, although that was not a new matter which was before the members of this government, although they had had the matter under consideration since January 20, 1900, although there had been one conference on the Bill which had been in their possession since 7th December, 1901, they would not even take the risk of framing a bald telegram to the legislative assembly at Regina without first having a consultation and conference with the Minister of the Interior. What is it that has happened since that has

caused this administration to change their minds as to consulting and conferring with the Minister of the Interior in respect to a question which was submitted to them by that draft Bill? The right hon. leader of the government has stated that no complaints have come in from that country, with the exception of a complaint with regard to the educational clauses of the Bill. I may say that if that statement had not been made I would not have troubled the House this afternoon. I have here a copy of a resolution passed at Medicine Hat three weeks ago. I may say, explaining it, that it objects to the attempt of the federal administration to retain the lands; it also objects to the proposed legislation in respect to education, and it goes further, and declares that the placing of the dividing line on the 4th meridian is a great hardship to the ranching industry, in that the laws governing a farming country would conflict with the laws governing a ranching country. Further on it says :

We would respectfully suggest that the government appoint a commissioner to inquire fully into all the circumstances, and that a copy of the resolutions be forwarded to the principal newspapers in the country, the premier and leader of opposition, also to the premier of the Northwest Territories, and W. Scott, M.P.

When the right hon. leader of the government says that no other objections were taken to this Bill, either he had not received a copy of that resolution, or the information which was communicated to the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) could not have been made known to him, or no attention was paid to the resolution by either gentleman. I say that there are complaints coming in, and that they are coming in all forms from all parts of the country in respect to the educational question, in respect to the boundaries of the new provinces, and as to the advisability of including in these provinces that great northern country. There is where the difficulty lies; the people of the west to-day have no person through whom they can communicate with the government, because there is no Minister of the Interior. They can communicate with their representatives, as the people of Medicine Hat did with the hon. member for West Assiniboia; but, apparently, if their representations do not meet the party views of these gentlemen, they will not take the trouble to lay the matter before the government. Therefore, the situation we have to-day is that the people of the Northwest Territories have no channel of communication with the government because there is no Minister of the Interior in the House of Commons. Taking up these resolutions that have been passed at Medicine Hat, which, I may say, is one of the most prosperous and flourishing towns in the Northwest Territories, and which is practically on the line which divides the proposed pro-