

animously on the two occasions, I believe by the legislature of the Northwest Territories—should not be considered nor acted upon in the immediate future. My motion demanded that the question should be considered and acted upon as promptly as circumstances permitted. Parliament was dissolved. Then, in the month of October, 1904, the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) suddenly awoke to the gravity of the situation in the midst of an election campaign. He then, for the first time, recollected that letters written to him by the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories in the month of May previous had not been answered; and, in all the stress and hurry of that campaign—no doubt, upon advice communicated to him by his friends in the Northwest Territories,—suddenly he came to the conclusion, notwithstanding the arguments put forward on his behalf, and indeed by himself in previous sessions of parliament, that the matter must be taken up without the slightest delay. So, he wrote to the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories as follows:

You will have learned, prior to the receipt of this letter, that parliament has been dissolved. The new House of Commons will contain not four but ten representatives of the Northwest Territories, who, coming fresh from the people, will be entitled to speak with confidence as to the views and requirements of those whom they represent. Should my government be sustained, we will be prepared, immediately after the election, to enter upon negotiations for the purpose of arriving at a settlement of the various questions involved in the granting of provincial autonomy, with a view to dealing with the question at the next session of parliament.

That was a very much balder proposition, I think, than the opposition had presented to parliament by motion and by speech in this House. We had at least defined our position with regard to the lands in the Northwest Territories which are owned by the government of Canada, and we had defined our position with regard to the tax exemption of lands patented, or about to be patented, by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and not one of these matters was mentioned by the Prime Minister. And, although my hon. friend from Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) was not willing to enter a 'blind pool' when it was proposed by the opposition, I understand he gleefully accepted the proposition of the government, although in that case the pool was very much 'blinder' than that to which he had objected. Now, certainly, the terms of the government's proposal might properly and indeed should properly have been discussed before and considered by the people of the Northwest Territories in that campaign. And so the ex-Minister of the Interior, my hon. friend from Brandon (Mr. Sifton) was asked about the terms. I do not know whether he was asked about the terms at the instigation of the hon. member from Edmonton or not. The Prime

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Minister of the Northwest Territories, who spoke during the course of that campaign, asked the Minister of the Interior of that day (Mr. Sifton) to define the terms. The request was much along the line which had been suggested by the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver). No satisfaction was given by the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton), then Minister of the Interior. His answer to the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories, who desired that the terms might be discussed during the progress of that election campaign, was that that hon. gentleman was a mischiefmaker in even suggesting that terms should be discussed. Speaking at Regina, about the 19th or 20th of October, 1904, he said:

Any man of ordinary intelligence in public life, and Mr. Haultain is a man of more than ordinary intelligence, knows full well that one member of a government consisting of fourteen members would not come here, and, without consulting his colleagues, undertake to bind them and the parliament of Canada on questions of such importance. Therefore, the suggestion is made in a spirit of mischief.

And again he said:

But I want to say that the man who gets up in the heat of a political contest and makes his strongest endeavour to bring that question into political discussion is not a friend of the Territories in any way, sense or shape.

Differing very much from my hon. friend from Edmonton, who said that the question ought not to be discussed as a matter of practical politics in this House or in the country, until the terms upon which these Territories were to enter the Canadian confederation as provinces should be absolutely defined and made known to the people of the Territories. My hon. friend from Brandon (Mr. Sifton) continued:

He is endeavouring to do a thing which might bring very serious results to the people of the Territories.

For what reason pray? Were not the people of the Territories entitled to have the hon. member for Brandon, then Minister of the Interior, discuss that question before them? Were they not entitled to have the views of the Prime Minister of Canada and his colleagues as to this matter which was precipitated into the political arena by the Prime Minister himself in the midst of an election campaign?

I have no authority whatever to say anything with regard to the subjects Mr. Haultain has mentioned, but we shall be in the position of having not four but ten members from the Territories in the next parliament, and we will get their views; and while we do not say that their views will prevail—for the entry of the Territories into confederation is a matter of contract with the other provinces—and while the terms we will be able to give you will be those we can get the other provinces to agree to, yet I can say for myself that I will do my best to get the most liberal term possible, and I will leave you to judge me by my past record.