

plied without friction, disturbance and discontent; that you cannot apply that remedy without causing as much dissatisfaction as satisfaction. It must be evident that while you redress the grievance of the minority by such act of interference you run great risk of creating a grievance on the part of the majority.

I commend that language of the right hon. gentleman in 1896 to his attention now and I ask him, whether or not he is pursuing a wise course in departing from that principle? And a trusted and valued colleague of his to whom I have already referred (Sir Louis Davies) speaking on a similar question at a little earlier date said this:

I desire to follow on the lines of the Liberal party laid down here years and years ago; in all local matters to refer the question to the people more immediately interested. I have never found that solution of the difficulty to fail; it has always proved equal to the occasion. Provinces have been driven almost to revolt; there has been discontent in Ontario and in Quebec; but when you apply the principle of provincial rights, when you allow the people to deal with their own local affairs as they please, the question is settled always in the way the people desire it to be settled. So it should be in the Northwest Territories. They have an equal right to speak with the people of the older provinces, and I for one will not be a party to taking away that right which if my own province were interested I would expect to have given to it.

These were regarded as wise utterances in days gone by and do they not meet with the approval of all reasonable and fair minded people and is there reason, is there justification, is there cause for departing to-day from that which was thought wise and right before?

Why Mr. Speaker, in the very speech which the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) delivered on the first reading of this Bill, it seems to me that he uttered his own condemnation, and I shall leave it to the judgment of the House whether I shall not make good that observation. He was dealing with the boundary question in the early part of his speech and laid down the principle that it was absolutely essential in Canada, so far as possible, to have the provinces of about equal size, and he attached a special importance to that principle, indeed, we can all see that it is more especially important to carry out that principle, in the Northwest of Canada. He was giving a reason why the boundaries of Manitoba should not be extended westerly, though Manitoba with 73,000 square miles of territory adjoins Alberta and Saskatchewan, each having an area of about 250,000 square miles. What was the reason that he gave? Let me read his own words.

But is there a member of this House who would advise us that we should carve out of the Territories which for thirty years have been under the jurisdiction of their own legislature, which are to-day represented by ten members in this House, any portion of what belongs to

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them and hand it over to the province of Manitoba, against the consent of the people of those Territories? If they agreed to it, well and good; I would have nothing to say. But the legislature of the Territories has more than once declared that they would not under any circumstances consent to any portion of their territory westward of the province of Manitoba being taken from them.

Further on he continues in the same strain:

But even this I am not prepared for my part to grant at this moment, because members representing that section to-day sit on the floor of this House, and they and their people have the right to be heard on that question, and if they do not agree to it I do not think the parliament of Canada should make the grant against their wishes.

If the right hon. gentleman is not prepared to extend the boundaries of Manitoba because the people of the Territories are unwilling that any portion of their territory shall be attached to Manitoba, how is it that he is willing to impose these restrictions upon them in face of the strongest possible protest by their Prime Minister, and accredited representative, Mr. Haultain? Is there one principle to be applied to the question, whether or not territory shall be added to Manitoba, and is another principle to be applied to a subject which the right hon. gentleman himself knows from long experience is liable to arouse feelings of discord and even of passion when the people think they are suffering any injustice? Why, any question as to the boundaries of the Northwest Territories would sink into insignificance, so far as sentiment goes, in comparison with that question which the right hon. gentleman has seen fit to fling abruptly into the political arena of Canada. There cannot be any doubt about that. What does the right hon. gentleman say, referring to the members from the Northwest Territories who sit on his side of the House. He says:

If they do not agree to it I do not think the parliament of Canada should make the grant against their wishes.

What does that mean? If it means anything it means this: That the seven members from the Northwest Territories who sit on that side of the House, hold this situation within the palms of their hands, and that if they maintain a firm stand they can prevent these restrictions from being imposed on the Northwest Territories. That is what it means if it means anything; and I assume that when the Prime Minister from his place of responsibility on the floor of this parliament gives utterance to these words as a solemn reason why a principle which he declares good should not be carried out, we have a right to attach some importance to his words. May I read them again?

If the members from the Northwest Territories do not agree to it, I do not think the