

And for the last three years, I may say, I have myself, upon various occasions, given the most careful attention to the important provisions which necessarily would come within the purview of the Bill. As was explained by my hon. friend the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) the other evening, before leaving Ottawa, as I was obliged to do about the New Year, I took occasion to put in writing, with sufficient fullness, the views which I entertained in regard to the important features of the Bill. This memorandum was placed in the possession of my colleagues so that they had the benefit of my suggestions, as also had the Prime Minister in the course of correspondence which he did me the honour to have with me upon various questions which arose during the discussions which took place from time to time while I was absent. I gave my advice to the best of my ability. And I may say, so far as that is concerned, that in the main, other than as refers to the question of education, and although there are some variations of detail—in the main, I say, and substantially, the Bill I recommended to my late colleagues is the Bill which has been introduced. There are some matters of detail respecting which difficulties arose, and different decisions were arrived at in the course of the discussions which took place with the representatives of the Northwest Territories. These were inevitable. But, substantially the provisions of the Bill are in accordance with the views I had formed in the course of my administration of that country.

So far as the question of the number of provinces is concerned, I formed the opinion which, I think, will be shared by almost every person on careful investigation of the case, that it was not desirable that this vast territory should be formed into one province. Certainly it was not desirable to carry out the old idea which prevailed that there were to be four provinces. I think the best opinion of the House will be met by the decision which the government has reached, that the medium course should be taken, and, that instead of one or four, we should have two provinces. Not only is the question of area to be considered as was shown by the Prime Minister in his remarks in introducing the Bill, but you must consider also the even more important question of population. The population of this one province, if this territory were made into one province, would eventually have such a preponderance as compared with the other provinces that it could not be said to be wise to make such an arrangement. These provinces are composed of territories which, almost acre for acre, is arable land and capable of sustaining population. No other provinces in the Dominion can be similarly described. And to make one province of that particular territory whose capacity for sustaining population is, on the average, so much greater than that of any

other province in the Dominion, giving it ultimately so much greater population than the other provinces, would certainly and obviously be unwise. Other considerations supported the same conclusion. The western and eastern portions of this territory lend themselves to different industrial conditions. Great grazing areas exist in the west such as are not found in the east. Mining possibilities on a large scale are to be found in the western part of the territory, and in the north, towards Edmonton, we have what is known as a mixed-farming district. Different classes of local legislation will be needed, and different conditions must be recognized in the two portions of the territory. Everybody who knows the conditions of that territory will be satisfied that the best results will result from having two local governments and two legislatures. Each of these legislatures and each of these administrations will have ample scope for all the energy it may see fit to display in the development of the resources of the great territory which is committed to its charge. And this parliament may be satisfied, I think, that that arrangement which is suggested will give the surest guarantee that the future development of these territories will be best facilitated.

While on the question of boundaries, I may say, having reference, for a moment, to a statement made by Mr. Haultain in an open letter addressed to the Prime Minister, that I also suggested, and it was my idea, that the dividing line between the two new provinces should be about sixty miles further east than that which is provided for by the Bill. It was in the discussions which took place with the government that the present arrangement was arrived at. I have not heard the reasons which have led to this conclusion but I have no doubt that the conclusion thus arrived at after careful consideration, will be found upon the whole to be that which is supported by the best reasons. This in any event is a small difference of detail.

But there is one other point I will suggest, perhaps more for the future consideration of the House than for present consideration, that there should be some different principle adopted. I see no reason why these provinces should not extend to the northern boundary of the mainland of Canada. The experience which I have had in the Department of the Interior has led me irresistibly to the conclusion that just so soon as it is possible to do so, the federal government should divest itself of the local administration of distant territory: and therefore I see no reason why, in so far as the administration of these Northwest Territories come within the scope of provincial legislation, that their administration should not be carried on by the local legislatures that we are to establish. That however is not an insuperable objection. The Territories of course still remain the property of