

territorial government disappear at the present time, even after these two provinces come into existence, but rather that the territorial government should be strengthened and that Athabaska should be the present basis of that government. A very considerable area of country is included in Athabaska, a large settlement may take place there at an early date and it would be much better to have Athabaska remain as it is, to establish a strong territorial government there and to extend our jurisdiction; our explorations and our exploitations over these northern Territories to a still greater extent than we have in the past. I commend this to the consideration of the government. If later on we see fit to extend these two new provinces farther north we can do so, but the chances are that economic conditions will develop in a short time which will justify us in keeping Athabaska separate from these new provinces, and I hope that Athabaska will be the foundation of a greater and stronger northern province. The development of science and the discoveries which are being made every day go to show that there is probably more value in this north land than there is in the south land. The prospects are that as science develops and invention goes forward there will be more of value found to exist in this northern country than we are able to realize to-day, and we ought to provide immediately for another strong territorial government to take charge of these unorganized territories. I would like to hear from the government what they think in regard to the proposal I make, that the territorial government should not disappear, but that it should be strengthened, that the basis of that territorial government should be the present territory of Athabaska, that some kind of legislative institutions should be given to that territory and that a new capital for that northern land should be selected. We should increase our exploration of that country. We know what the Americans are doing in regard to their explorations in Hudson Bay, and if we are to maintain the sovereignty of Canada over that whole country we should organize the country immediately under a territorial government.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The ideas of my hon. friend (W. F. Maclean), if I may say so, are all right, but his conclusions are all wrong, and I think I will be able to satisfy him of that. We are aware that the Americans have been patrolling the northern waters and that by their recent maps which I have seen they have given American names to some parts of the territory up there which I think are under British jurisdiction. We ought to provide against that. My hon. friend says that the best way to provide against that is to organize a strong territorial government in the north. But, we have already provided against that and if we are to assert our jurisdiction over these

northern waters the basis of this movement is not the establishment of a government in the northern part of the continent, in Athabaska, but the basis must be in the east.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. That may be.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. We have at the present time, as my hon. friend knows, organized an expedition which has been two winters if not three in these northern waters. Mr. Low just returned last year from an expedition and another commander—I forget his name—is now there to assert jurisdiction. He has planted the British flag upon many parts of these northern territories, and his report is available now. This is the only way we can take jurisdiction in these distant lands. My hon. friend will agree with me that if we were to organize a government, say of Athabaska, in order to reach these far away points we would have to go around the Mackenzie river and we could not find a base of operation at the mouth of that river. We have to do it in two ways. So far as the territory immediately north of Mackenzie is concerned we can have a post of the Mounted Police at the mouth of the Mackenzie river, and with regard to the territory in the vicinity of Greenland and Baffin Straits we can only reach it from the east as we are doing at the present time. We have, I think, done everything in order to anticipate the objection to which my hon. friend has called the attention of the House. We cannot allow the Americans to take possession of these lands; we claim them to be British territory and we intend to assert our jurisdiction over them.

Another question is, as to why we included Athabaska in these new provinces. We have done so because a portion of the district of Athabaska is altogether different in its character from the district of Mackenzie and the districts of Keewatin and Ungava. A portion of the district of Athabaska is fair agricultural land; all the section which is watered by the Peace river is very good agricultural land and settlement is going there already.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Perhaps enough to make a province.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Not enough to make a province but enough to be attached to the province of Alberta, because these people have all their connections with Edmonton and that part of the new provinces. We have attached that part of the district of Athabaska to the new provinces because it is largely of the same character as the other portion of the provinces. There is a section east which is rather of a rough character and hardly fit for settlement, but all the section which is watered by the Peace river is very good agricultural land, and already two grist mills of some importance are there, and they are supplied by the agricultural products of that valley.