

goes directly to the principle of the Bill which we are discussing. In order that I may not misquote the hon. gentleman I will read what he said :

I represent a section of the people of the Northwest Territories and I say that the people of the Northwest Territories have never asked for provincial autonomy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know who represents the people of the Territories the better, the thirty-five representatives in the local legislature at Regina or the hon. gentleman who represents Edmonton. I do not know what he means by stating that the people of the Northwest Territories never asked for provincial autonomy. I would remind him of the fact that on July 20, 1900, an address was sent to this government by the legislative assembly at Regina, and that on December 7, 1901, a draft Bill was prepared to which reference has been made and the terms of which were familiar to the thirty-five local representatives at Regina. In the year 1901, the Board of Trade of Edmonton, the town the hon. gentleman (Mr. Oliver) lives in, passed a resolution asking that the Territories be created into two provinces. On April 2, 1902, the Eastern Assiniboia Liberal Association met at Indian Head and passed similar resolutions. I am not quite sure, but I have a suspicion that the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) was present at that meeting in company with Mr. Bulyea. In 1902, there was a local election in the Territories, and in the platform put forward by Mr. Haultain there were these two planks :

1. Equal rights with all the other provinces of the Dominion.

2. Control of the public domain in the west.

These are the matters that the government of the Territories are now fighting for and these are the matters upon which your judgment is invited in my appeal to you for re-election in the legislature. A similar appeal has been made in every constituency in the country by every candidate whose election will give support to the government at this particular period in the history of the Territories. The issue is plain ; it is for the people of the Territories to decide.

The election took place and the result of that election demonstrated that Mr. Haultain and his supporters represented public opinion in the Territories on the question of provincial autonomy. I find that four resolutions have subsequently been passed by the territorial assembly demanding the provincial status ; I find also that the very strongest advocate of the stand taken by Mr. Haultain, was, up to a short time ago, the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott). He complimented Mr. Haultain on the stand he had taken in asking for provincial autonomy, but a short time afterwards the hon. member (Mr. Scott) changed his opinion, and assigned as a reason for

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY.

delay that litigation was now pending as to the exemption of the Canadian Pacific Railway from taxation, and he held it would be folly for the government to put through a Bill leaving that matter an open question. But to-day, the hon. member (Mr. Scott) is supporting a Bill which contains a clause continuing that exemption for ever. I also find that on April the 3rd, the Prince Albert Board of Trade passed a resolution declaring that the government should grant provincial autonomy. On March the 3rd, there was a similar resolution from the Calgary Board of Trade. On March 25th, the Conservative convention at Moosejaw at which there were over 200 delegates, some of whom came 700 miles to attend, passed a resolution declaring in favour of the immediate granting of full provincial autonomy including the ownership of the public lands, mines and minerals. I also find that the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver), speaking on October 13, 1903, used these words :

I would wish to point out to the hon. members and to the gentlemen on both sides, that it is not we who are objecting to provincial autonomy. We are asking provincial autonomy, but we want it on certain terms.

In January, 1904, the Liberal convention in nominating a candidate for Southern Alberta, passed a resolution in favour of provincial autonomy. On September 29 last, the right hon. the First Minister wrote to Mr. Haultain promising that if his government were returned to power they would immediately take into consideration the question of granting provincial autonomy to the Territories. I may point out that seven of the Liberal candidates were returned to this House, and not one of these gentlemen, so far as I know, has been instructed by his constituents to repudiate the pledge given to the people by the Liberal leader. I say, Sir, that the resolution I have read, asking that the mines, lands and minerals be left to the provinces, represents the true sentiment of the people of the west. They have the conviction that they are entitled to have in the local government the administration of the mines, lands and minerals in their territory, and without that they will not be satisfied. The only argument which I have heard presented in support of the overturning of the principles of the union, is that there might be a conflict between the local and federal authorities, and that the federal government might not be able to carry on its immigration policy. That argument was used by the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton), but he has not always thought that way because in the province of Manitoba in days gone by he contended for full provincial rights and he advocated handing over the lands to his province ; later on he advocated handing over the school lands as well.