

vinces that these lands should be settled as rapidly as possible, and experience has taught us that desirable end can best be obtained by the union of a vigorous immigration policy with a system of free homestead grants of 160 acres of land. I think it can hardly be denied that one of the strongest features of our immigration policy is the free homestead grant of 160 acres of land, and it is the part of our immigration policy which has the greatest attraction for the largest number of settlers. If the provinces were to take over these lands, would the free homestead grant be done away with? Not necessarily. The hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. W. J. Roche) have suggested that these lands be handed over to the provinces with the provision attached that the provinces shall continue the free homestead grants.

But, Mr. Speaker, if the system of free homesteads is to be continued and these lands given away to the settlers, how would the provinces obtain the revenue necessary, not only to offset the amount which this Bill provides in lieu of lands, but also the amount necessary to cover the expense of administration. As has been forcibly pointed out by the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) the interest the provinces would have in these lands if they were handed over would be to obtain therefrom a revenue, and this could not be done if the lands were given to the settlers free. If the lands were not given to the settlers free, but were reserved for sale, it cannot be doubted that a serious check to the rapid settlement of these lands would be administered. It has been suggested that the people of these provinces being on the ground are in as good a position, if not better, to manage these lands than the federal authorities, that they are just as much interested in having the lands settled, and that they are just as capable of handling them as is this government. I grant all that, Mr. Speaker. It is perfectly true that we in the Northwest Territories are more interested in the development of that country than anybody else can be; and rightly or wrongly, we believe that we are just as capable of managing our own lands as the other provinces are of managing their lands, or as this government is of managing its lands. But while that is true, we are not capable, neither is this government capable, nor is any other government capable, of obtaining from those lands the revenue necessary to carry on the administration of the provinces and at the same time give the lands away to the settlers free. The revenue we must have, and we have either to get it out of these lands or from the federal treasury; and looking at it from the point of view both of the provinces and the Dominion, I think the best interests of both are being furthered by this government retaining in its possession the lands and giv-

ing compensation to the provinces therefor. It is best for the provinces because, while we get compensation for the lands, we at the same time get that which is best for the provinces, namely, the rapid settlement of the lands. It is also best for the Dominion government, because the rapid settlement of the lands means to them a large increase in the revenue from customs duties. So I have no hesitation in saying that the people of the west whom I have the honour to represent on the floor of this House, I think I can say without reference to party, will unanimously approve the policy of the government in retaining the lands and having them rapidly settled up under the vigorous immigration policy pursued by this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a few words as to the educational clauses contained in this Bill. These clauses make provision for confirming and continuing the present school law in the Northwest Territories. This law was passed by the legislature, if I recollect aright, in 1892, and was subsequently confirmed and consolidated in 1901; and all this Bill asks parliament to do is to confirm and continue that school law which has been in force since 1892. We are asked to confirm that law and make it part and parcel of the constitution of the new provinces. Now, Sir, whether this parliament ought to confirm and continue that school law and make it part and parcel of the constitution of the new provinces involves, it seems to me, the consideration of two very important questions; one is a question of law and the other is a question of policy. The one involves an examination of the constitutional and legal rights, both of the Dominion and of the provinces, as affected by this Bill; the other involves a consideration of the merits of the ordinances themselves as the foundation of the future school system of the new provinces, including therein a consideration whether or not, under all the circumstances of the case, it is just and right and reasonable that provision should be made to preserve to the minority the rights and privileges which they have up to the present time enjoyed under the ordinances. Now, as to the constitutional and legal questions involved. It seems to me, these questions are very easy to ask, but not so easy to answer. The first question is: Has this parliament a right to establish new provinces out of that western territory and to give them such a constitution as it deems best? There is no question about our right to create provinces out of the Territories. But there does seem to be a great conflict of opinion as to the constitution which this parliament is empowered to grant. If I understand aright the argument of the leader of the opposition, his position is, that this parliament cannot create a new province and give to that province a smaller sphere of authority than is given by the British North America