

presented by Mr. Haultain, which had been unanimously adopted by the legislature of the Northwest Territories. It is also opposed to many expressions in the public press of the west during the time of this debate. And it is not unwise at this moment to recall the circumstances that, with respect to the boundary, with respect to many details that have been dealt with by this Bill, the wishes of the Northwest have been put forward as the true test. But when we come to the question of administering and controlling the lands we have departed from any consideration of the wishes of the people of the new provinces, and have decided to withhold the control and retain the administration of these lands.

Another argument in favour of entrusting these lands to the people is that the lands can be better administered and controlled in the province than at Ottawa. They can be better administered and controlled by officers of the provincial government in touch with the people and comparatively near at hand than by the officers of the Dominion government. What reason is there, as I have said before, why a citizen of Ontario should have the right and privilege to deal with the minerals and public lands of his own province at Toronto, while the citizen of the Northwest must be obliged, for the same purpose, to write or send to the city of Ottawa? I am not going into an extended argument on this subject. The matter has been dealt with in detail by my hon. friend from Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) and my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake), as well as by other hon. gentlemen; and for me to indulge in an elaborate argument at this stage of the discussion would be weariness to the House as well as to myself.

The arguments of the government on this subject are threefold. The Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) bases his main contention on the necessity of controlling the lands that they may be used as a means of promoting immigration. He says there must be free homestead entries, and therefore there must be control of the lands at Ottawa. This consideration seems entitled to no great weight. I dealt with it on a previous occasion. Another hon. gentleman seemed to be under the impression that there would be less corruption if the administration of the lands were in the hands of the central government than if they were administered by the provinces. The Prime Minister adduces on this subject the example of the United States, where the federal government has retained the control of the public lands—although he took good care not to follow the United States with respect to certain other features of the Bill to which public attention has been called. The example of the United States has not been a happy one, if we test this question by the possibility of corruption. Those who have investigated

the political affairs of the United States, know that some of the greatest scandals which have occurred in that country have been in connection with the public lands. The additional reasons which influenced the administration are those which they do not openly state—the desire for preserving patronage, for retaining power over the electorate of that country. In respect of these matters, no doubt, there were influences which were exercised upon the administration. But looking at the matter from the standpoint solely of the public interest, I venture to say that the policy should have been to hand over the lands to the administration and control of the provincial executives and provincial legislatures.

The next provision of the Bill to which I have specially referred is that which deals with the division of the province for the purpose of the election of a provincial legislature. Now, I am not going over a twice-told tale. I shall not review the provisions of clause 12 of the Bill and of the schedule which forms part of that clause. These matters have been discussed very elaborately in the committee of the whole House. But I will just point out one object lesson in this distribution which seems to me to afford a guide to the principle, or lack of principle, which has guided the administration and its friends in framing clause 12. The population of the province of Alberta is estimated by the government at 250,000. The number of members in the new legislature is to be twenty-five. Two constituencies are to be established in the northern part of the province in communities which have not, up to the present time, been given any representation either in the parliament of Canada or in the provincial legislature. Hon. gentlemen on the other side are now extremely solicitous about the persons who inhabit these portions of the province. They are extremely solicitous that those people should be represented in parliament. But up to the present time I have not heard a murmur of protest, either in this parliament or in the territorial assembly, on account of their lack of representation in parliament or in the territorial assembly. We have certain sources of information which have been pointed out by the government as those which guided them in making this distribution. One source of information is the census of 1901. According to that census the electoral division of Peace River contained 92 whites and 677 half-breeds, or a total population of 769 among whom electors might be found. The constituency of Athabaska, according to the census of 1901, contained 117 white persons and 824 half-breeds, or a total population of 941 among whom electors might be found. In addition to this, the Peace River district contained at that time 955 Indians and Athabaska contained 735 Indians. There is one post office in the entire territory comprised in the two ridings, and the income from that one post office is \$90 per annum. You will