

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. He is filling the position, not as permanent commissioner, but as acting commissioner?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the second reading of Bill (No. 69) to establish and provide for the government of the province of Alberta, and the amendment of Mr. R. L. Borden thereto.

Mr. ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Centre York). Mr. Speaker, in resuming the discussion on this question, which has been engaging the attention of the House so long, it would be a bold man indeed who would be expected to say anything new upon the subject. It has been discussed in every possible phase, and the arguments both pro and con which have been presented have left very little to be said. However, on such an important issue as this, one hesitates to give a silent vote, and therefore at the risk of wearying the House I shall crave its indulgence for a very short time. There is one thing very gratifying in the two Bills now before the House. I do not think anything could illustrate better or afford a stronger evidence of the great prosperity and the wonderful development of this country. We are undertaking by these Bills to create two new provinces in the great Northwest, which a few years ago was scarcely known to civilized man, where the Indian and the Buffalo were the only dwellers—in those vast regions of wonderful extent, of immense resources, of almost incredible possibilities. Nothing could warrant that but the great progress that is taking place and the stream of immigration that is going into that country, owing to the wise administration of the department by the late Minister of the Interior, and also as a tribute to the wise statesmanship of the worthy premier who guides the destinies of this country.

When we look around us it is almost incredible that such great changes should have taken place in the last ten years in this Dominion. We find that our trade has more than doubled, we find our young men instead of fleeing from this country as from a plague, now remaining in it and going out to build up homes for themselves in the Northwest. Not only that but we find a stream of immigration 150,000 strong coming into this Dominion every year with strong arms and stout hearts to build up and develop the immense resources of the Northwest. That development is one of the most gratifying things to which the people of Canada can look forward and as I said before the necessity for creating these new provinces could only be brought about by the wonderful development that has taken place and the marked progress

that has been going on for the last few years. This parliament is now charged with a very important duty. We have to give these new provinces a certain constitution; we have to define the powers, and privileges which they shall possess. First we have to decide whether there shall be one or two new provinces. The government of this country have decided that their shall be two provinces. Mr. Haultain, the premier of the Northwest differs from that decision and thinks that there should be only one, but in my opinion the government in coming to the conclusion that that vast region should be divided into two provinces has made a wise decision, a decision that I am sure will meet with the approval of not only the members of this House but of the great majority of the people of the Dominion of Canada. We have other things to do. We have to decide what the boundaries of those Territories shall be. We must take these immense regions, these vast and boundless prairies with their rivers, streams and lakes, their mountains, hills and valleys, rich in mineral wealth, rich in agricultural resources, 500,000 square miles of territory and say where those boundaries shall be. I think the government have been wise in deciding that the boundaries shall be as is provided in the Bill. We have also to decide what disposition shall be made of the public lands. Here we find that the premier of the Northwest Territories and some members of this House differ from the decision arrived at by the government. The government have decided that the lands of the great Northwest shall be held by the Dominion of Canada. Mr. Haultain and some others believe that those lands should be handed over to the people of the Northwest Territories. For my part I quite concur in the decision arrived at by the government that the Dominion lands should be vested in the Dominion parliament as they are the best able to manage and take care of these lands. Then we have many other things to decide; we must decide whether these provinces should have any representation in this House or in the Senate and if so what that representation should be. The government have decided that for the present they shall have four members in the Senate and the usual proportionate number in the House of Commons. Then we have also to decide where the seat of government should be. We have in that respect provided only temporarily that the seat of government should be at Regina and Edmonton until otherwise decided by the provinces themselves. Then we have to decide whether each of these provinces shall have one or more legislative assemblies. Three provinces of this Dominion have two chambers, a legislative assembly and also a Senate. The government has decided that there shall be only one chamber in the new provinces in the Northwest. Perhaps the people of the