

would not be in the best interest of the country, and believing that we should stand by the British North America Act as it is, I shall vote for the amendment of the leader of the opposition and shall hope and trust that it will be carried and that we may have peace and prosperity from this time forth.

Mr. R. D. WILMOT (Sunbury and Queens, N.B.). Mr. Speaker, though an old member of this House, both in years and in service here I have never accustomed myself to addressing the House. Therefore, I claim from my conferees here an unusual degree of leniency and kindness. I ask them to overlook any mistakes I may make, assuring them that those mistakes will be of the head not of the heart. Before I go further, I appeal to hon. members for consideration especially upon one point. I would ask an avoidance of interruptions such as we have just heard. If any statements I make are such as hon. members cannot agree with, they will have their opportunity to reply. I would ask, therefore, that I be spared interruption of the few remarks I am to make and I know that my friends on both sides will treat me in accordance with my desire. Even in so important a question as the one now before us, were I left to my own choice, I would not speak. But I feel that I have behind me a constituency that should be heard on the floor of this House on this momentous question. But, if against my own will, I occupy the time of the House, I can assure hon. members that it will not be for long.

The question before us has been discussed threadbare. A man would need to be heaven-born, or at least heaven-inspired, to find anything new to say upon this subject. Everything that can be thought of by the human mind has been thought of already, and everything that can be said has been said. I shall not even attempt anything of an original nature. Among the drawbacks to parliamentary life is the fact that we are called upon to hear again and again the same things said until they grow wearisome and make one look back to private life with longing.

I said that I am here to speak, not in my individual capacity, but as representing the sentiments of the people in my constituency. The whole Dominion of Canada, I believe, is in favour of the establishment of the new provinces in the Northwest. I think there is no difference of opinion on that matter. But I think the government should have taken the people into their confidence before taking a step of such grave import. Had they done so we would not have seen so much difference as has been in evidence on the part of our hon. friends of the Liberal party. The premier, when he brought in this measure, said that he would stand or fall by it. Well, we all know that he took four or five weeks to amend his measure, owing to

the difference of opinion that existed in the ranks of his own party. I think that time was not lost. I think every moment of those four or five weeks could have been used to the great profit of the country. I think it was a great mistake to introduce legislation so important as this after a general election in which the subject of such legislation had scarcely been mentioned. The government should have given the people an opportunity of expressing their opinion on this legislation before it was introduced. But the government did not see fit to do so, and consequently this legislation has been brought before a House elected, in my humble judgment, without any warrant to deal with the question. Had the boundaries of the new provinces been known to the people of the Northwest, I think the result of the election would have been very different in the Northwest Territories. Had the proposed boundaries been known, would Manitoba have given this government one supporter? Would the men from the Territories have sent the same contingent had it been known that the control of the lands was to be wrested from their possession? I pause for a reply. Would they have been satisfied? I say unhesitatingly that defeat would have overtaken the government had this Bill been in question at the last general election. I think that Manitoba has been treated with extreme injustice in leaving that province with an area only one-third that of each of the new provinces. There must be a mystery attached to such an apportionment. Can the government defy or set aside the will of an entire province? A new province bereft of the control of its lands is little more independent than the Indian reserve. I think that the local government is in a better position to deal with the lands of the province than is the federal government. They are on the spot, they are more directly in touch with everything concerning those lands than is the federal government situated at Ottawa. Another objection I have to federal control of these lands is the temptation to spoliation offered to the Dominion government. I do not refer to this government any more than to any other government that might be in power at Ottawa. I think there is less liability to act unfairly in regard to the disposition of those lands when they are left to the local authorities than when they are left to the Dominion authorities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the discussion of the educational clauses, I think this House is to be congratulated upon the fairness and upon the freedom from disagreeable language with which the discussion has been conducted. There has been little or no acrimony. I have not attended the House all the time, but I have been here a good deal, I have heard a great many of the speeches, but I have heard none of an acrimonious nature. It may have occurred