

Crown lands, and in fact I remember that at the opening of the session my hon. friend from Marquette (Mr. Roche) reminded me that the province of Manitoba wanted to have, as he pointedly remarked, her lands. But in the petition which has been sent by the legislature of Manitoba to the House during the present session the province has taken an altogether different attitude. In that petition the province asks, not for all the ungranted Crown lands, but for a money allowance in lieu of lands. It must be remembered that in this matter the Dominion is not a free agent. The constitution of the province of Manitoba gives the lands, not to the province, but to the Dominion. The terms under which the province of Manitoba has been admitted into the union are exactly the same in that respect as these under which the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta have been admitted. The province of Manitoba therefore asks that it should be given the same treatment as has been given to the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The claims of Manitoba in this respect are in my estimation somewhat exaggerated. These claims follow :

That supplementary and in addition to the prevailing provisions as to the annual allowance of the province by the Dominion for cost of government, a per capita allowance of 80 cents a head of the population, there be inserted in any Act of the parliament of Canada extending the boundaries of the province as above set forth, the following provisions respecting capital account and in lieu of lands, such provisions in every respect being similar to and identical with those respecting said matters as are contained in certain Acts of the parliament of Canada, passed in the year 1905, creating the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The memorial then goes on to say :

Inasmuch as the province of Manitoba is not in debt, it shall be entitled to be paid and to receive from the government of Canada, by half-yearly payments in advance, an annual sum of four hundred and five thousand three hundred and seventy-five dollars, being the equivalent of interest at the rate of five per cent per annum on the sum of eight million one hundred and seven thousand five hundred dollars.

I may say at once that this claim of the province of Manitoba to be given a certain allowance in lieu of public debt will not strike this House as at all tenable. Manitoba is not a new province. It has been a province now for more than forty years. It has received an allowance on account of public debt, as all the other provinces did when they came into confederation. The House does not perhaps remember at the moment the reason for the allowances on account of debt made to the provinces when they came into confederation. At the time of confederation the debt of the united provinces of Upper and Lower Canada amount-

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

ed to \$67,000,000, and of this amount the Dominion assumed \$62,100,000; that of Nova Scotia was \$8,000,000 and that of New Brunswick \$7,000,000. The Dominion assumed the debts of these two provinces. It was found that the debt per head of the population was larger in the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada than in the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and there was a provision introduced in the British North America Act to this effect :

In case the public debts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick do not at the union amount to \$8,000,000 and \$7,000,000 respectively, they shall respectively receive, by half-yearly payments in advance from the government of Canada, interest at five per centum per annum on the difference between the actual amounts of their respected debts and such stipulated amounts.

That is to say, the government of the Dominion having assumed the debts of these four provinces at the amounts stated, it was provided that if they did not correspond to an equal standard, the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick should receive compensation from the treasury of Canada to bring them to a parity with the other provinces. In 1884 or 1885 another arrangement was made whereby the government of the Dominion assumed the debts of Ontario and Quebec to the amount of \$5,000,000 and gave equal treatment to all the other provinces of the Dominion, giving them a special allowance to bring them up to the standard with regard to the allotment of the debt. When the province of Manitoba was taken into the Dominion, that province was given compensation for debt—because it had no debt at that time—similar to what was given to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. When British Columbia was taken into confederation, the same thing was done with respect to that province. In fact, when any other province was taken into confederation it was given a special allowance in lieu of debt. But I do not think that the province of Manitoba has any claim whatever at the present time in that regard. It is true the public debt is much larger today than it was when Manitoba was admitted to the Dominion, but Manitoba has had the benefit of its share of that debt, which has gone into the construction of public works. So that there is no reason to depart from the arrangement that was made when Manitoba entered confederation. Then the province of Manitoba puts forward another claim in these words :

As an additional allowance in lieu of public lands, there shall be paid by Canada to the province, annually by half-yearly payments in advance, for five years from the time this Act comes into force, to provide for the construction of necessary public buildings, the sum of ninety-three thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars.