

confederation was established in the year 1867, the Canada of that day was not at all what is the Canada of the present day. The Canada of that day did not extend beyond the western limits of the province of Ontario. On the other side of the continent, on the shores of the Pacific ocean, there was a British colony, British Columbia, absolutely isolated; and between British Columbia on one side and Ontario on the other side there was a vast extent of territory, the fairest portion perhaps of the continent, which was under British sovereignty, but in which British sovereignty had always been dormant. That vast extent of the continent, the fairest, as I said, and the most fertile, was administered, loosely administered by the Hudson Bay Company, under a charter which the company claimed, gave her almost sovereign sway, and which she used to keep this vast extent of country as a close preserve for her immense operations in the fur trade. I need not tell you, Sir, the fact is well known and present to the memory of all, that it was the intention of the fathers of confederation not to limit it to the comparatively narrow bounds in which it was included in 1867, but to extend it eastward and westward between the two oceans. I need hardly tell you, Sir, the fact is known to all and well remembered by every one, that provision was made in the instrument of confederation itself, for the admission into confederation of British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, and even Newfoundland, and especially for these territories which at last have come in to-day as part of the Canadian family. In the very first year of confederation, the very first session of the first parliament, resolutions were introduced into this House and adopted unanimously for the acquisition of Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories, and the extinguishment therein of the title of the Hudson Bay Company. This was accomplished in a very short time, and as soon as accomplished, the government of that day, the government of Sir John Macdonald, proceeded to carve the new province of Manitoba out of the wilderness, and without any preliminary stage endowed it at once with all the rights and privileges of a province.

If we go back to the history of those days, perhaps the opinion will not be unwarranted that it would have been a wiser course, if instead of bringing Manitoba at once into the confederation full fledged and fully equipped as a province, that maturity had been reached by gradual stages extended over a few years. If that course had been adopted, perhaps some mistakes would have been avoided from the effects of which we have not yet completely recovered.

Very different was the course and policy of Mr. Mackenzie when he came into office with regard to the Northwest Territory. Up to the year 1875 the Northwest Territories had been administered under no special form of government. But in 1875

Mr. Mackenzie, being then Prime Minister of Canada, introduced into this House and carried unanimously a measure, a very important measure, the object of which, as he said himself, was to give to the Northwest Territories an 'entirely independent government.' This measure has been the charter under which the Northwest Territories have come to their present state of manhood. It has never been repealed. Additions have been made to it from time to time, but it has remained and is to this day the rock upon which has been reared the structure, which we are about to crown with complete and absolute autonomy. By this measure it was provided that a Lieutenant Governor should be appointed for the Northwest Territories. The Lieutenant Governor was to be vested with executive power, and he was to administer that power with the assistance of a council to be composed of five members, the Lieutenant Governor and his advisers to be appointed by the Governor in Council. Apart from these administrative powers the Lieutenant Governor was also invested with large legislative authority. He could make laws for taxation, for local and municipal purposes, property and civil rights, the administration of justice, public health, police, roads, highways and bridges—generally all matters of a purely local and private nature. There was also an enactment in that measure to the effect that when any district, not exceeding 1,000 square miles, contained a population of not less than 1,000 people of adult age, exclusive of aliens and unfranchised Indians, it could be erected into an electoral district which should thenceforward be entitled to elect a member to the council. There was also an important enactment with regard to education, introducing into that country the system of separate schools in force in the province of Ontario. But I shall say nothing at the present time of this important part of the law of 1875, as I propose to come again to it at a later stage of the observations which I desire to offer to the House. This Act remained in force without any important modifications up to the year 1896, when the Territories were given representation in this parliament. Two years later an important step in advance was also taken in their development, that is to say, in 1898. The executive council was abolished, so far, at all events, as its powers of legislation were concerned, and a legislative assembly was created, to be composed of twenty-five members, twenty-two of which were to be elected by the people and three to be known as legal experts, to be appointed by the Governor in Council; and a new executive council was to be appointed under the name of advisory council to advise the Lieutenant Governor upon all matters of finance. In 1891 another step forward was taken, and a very important one. The legislative assembly of the Territories was given additional powers; and if you take