

Natural Resources

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#### Misunderstanding Still Exists

In spite of all the publicity that has been given to the basis on which Manitoba and the other Prairie Provinces in the main rest their cases in connection with the natural resources, there still seems to be a misconception of their claims in some parts of the country. Referring to the prospective negotiations between the Prairie Provinces and the Dominion, the Vancouver Province says that the Dominion may have to deal with each province separately, and it proceeds:

"Nor can the federal ministry deal with any of them in the way of adding to the subsidy directly or indirectly without raising a question in all the other provinces of Canada. Moreover, if there is to be a restoration of lands to any province without the assent of the province of the consideration under which they were conveyed to the Dominion, British Columbia has a large interest in the decision."

This seems to suggest that if the Prairie Provinces obtain a settlement under which they will be any better off than they are now, then all the other provinces will demand some corresponding benefit from the Dominion government. It also implies a possibility of the settlement of the resources question taking the simple form of the acceptance by the Prairie Provinces of what is left of their resources, the dropping of the subsidy and the forgetting all about the resources alienated in the past, the proceeds from which were devoted to Dominion purposes. There is no reference to the claim of these provinces that they have not received from the Dominion government equal treatment with the other provinces in the matter of control of their natural resources, nor to the solid constitutional basis on which that claim rests.

The other provinces have always had the full enjoyment of their natural resources. This has been the regular practice in all self-governing British provinces or states, and the Prairie Provinces have suffered by the exception that was made in their case. They now ask, therefore, that the old arrangement be wiped out and that a new arrangement be made under which the western provinces will recover the remaining resources and also, as recognition of the constitutional rights which were theirs from the beginning, receive compensation for the resources alienated in the past, less, of course, the amount of the subsidies that have been paid in lieu of lands and the money spent by the Dominion on administering the western resources.

Once the western case is properly understood, it is plain that the other provinces have no interest in it. It is a matter only between the Dominion and the Prairie Provinces. There is nothing coming to the other provinces simply because the West is at last to receive what it has always been entitled to.

In the near future the negotiations will be renewed at Ottawa. According to Premier Greenfield, of Alberta, there are likely to be three separate agreements between the Dominion government and the respective Prairie Provinces. This would be because, though the underlying principle is the same in each case, there are different circumstances in connection with each province. It is to be hoped that the negotiations will result in satisfactory agreements and that when these are submitted to parliament for ratification the members will not raise unreasoning opposition but will grant the West the justice for which it has long been waiting.

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