

who now leads the government (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) occupied the position which I have the honour to fill in this House as leader of the opposition, he was strong and determined and pronounced in his protest against any federal interference or intrusion into provincial affairs. There was no one whose voice was louder on such occasions, or whose protest was more earnest than were the voice and the protest of my right hon. friend who is now the leader of the government (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). But since the present administration has come into power we find a vast change in that respect. The provincial governments are regarded in many instances as mere appendices, mere puppets, one might say, of the federal government, so long as they are controlled by the party now in power in Ottawa, and if they do not happen to be in sympathy with the party now in power here, then we find occasionally, at least, certain manifestations of an intention to interfere, which are not at all in accordance with the views put forward by the leader of the government (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) in days gone by.

I alluded, at the commencement of this session, to a case of very pronounced interference by the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier); his interference, admitted, acknowledged and stated in a letter under the hand of the present Prime Minister of the province of Saskatchewan regarding a matter in which neither the Prime Minister of Canada nor the government of Canada should have interfered in any way, that is to say, the selection by the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan of the gentleman who should be called upon to form the first cabinet of that province. The letter to which I alluded was read last year by my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake), and was explicit in its terms. It did not speak of the selection of a Prime Minister of the province by the Lieutenant Governor of that province, but it spoke plainly and without the slightest disguise, of the selection of the Prime Minister of Saskatchewan—how? By the Prime Minister of Canada, and when my right hon. friend alluded to this matter in debate in this session, as he did not allude to it last session, he practically admitted the whole charge up to the hilt. He said that the reason why Mr. Haultain was not selected to be the first Prime Minister of Saskatchewan was because he had taken strong ground in opposition to certain provisions of the Autonomy Bill, and because he had declared on the public platform that he would test the constitutionality of certain provisions of that Bill. He said that for that reason he could not be selected by the Liberal caucus in the province of Saskatchewan, and for that reason he could not be Prime Minister of the territory. Well, parties had not been divided on Dominion lines in the province of Saskatchewan up to

that time; yet the Prime Minister said that Mr. Haultain's action in that regard prevented him from being selected by the Liberal convention in Saskatchewan, and therefore prevented him from being selected by the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. What provision of the British North America Act, or what constitutional provision, made it necessary for the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan to select the man who was pointed out by the Liberal caucus in that province? The Prime Minister openly declared that as Mr. Haultain was not selected by the Liberal convention in Saskatchewan, therefore he could not be selected by the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan as the man who should be called upon to fill the position of Prime Minister of that province.

Some reference has been made to a reflection having been cast upon the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. I venture to say that the remarks of the Prime Minister in that regard cast a graver reflection upon the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan than anything that has been said in the Conservative press or in parliament. The Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan was not to use his own good judgment in selecting the man who had for thirteen years commanded almost unanimously the confidence of the people of that country; but the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan was to receive his directions as to the man whom he should select, from the Liberal caucus or convention of that new province. That is only one of the many illustrations which might be brought to the attention of the House with regard to the tendency of the present administration at Ottawa unduly to interfere in provincial affairs. The case to which I have just now directed the House in regard to these lands in British Columbia is another illustration, and for that reason I have deemed it worth my while to bring the matter at this stage to the attention of the House and the country.

Hon. FRANK OLIVER (Minister of the Interior). I am sorry that I am not able to appreciate the lucidity of the speech of the leader of the opposition. Unfortunately he is labouring under an entire misapprehension as to the facts of the case, which misapprehension might have been avoided if, before bringing this matter up in parliament, he had seen fit to ask for the production of the papers connected with it. In the first place, he finds cause of offence because there has been a communication between the government of the Dominion and the government of British Columbia, which communication was not published in the 'Canada Gazette,' and he says that all orders in council relating to or disposing of public lands should be published in the 'Canada Gazette.' Did my hon. friend read the order in council? Did he make himself familiar with any of the circumstances of the case? The order in