

Natural Resources

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PRAIRIE CROWN LANDS.

Once more the question of the control of lands and other crown domains of the prairie provinces is pressing on the attention of the federal and provincial governments. It is included in immigration and settlement problems in all three provinces. It gains importance and urgency in Alberta with each discovery of coal and oil, with the development of irrigation projects, and generally with the increasing revenues and prospect of revenues from public resources. New conferences are to be held, and again the question will be considered whether the provinces are willing to relinquish their subsidies in lieu of lands if their lands are returned to them.

At last accounts Alberta was willing. She expects to get more revenue from the crown domain than the subsidy she will lose. In view of the fact that the Dominion has received less from these lands than has been paid in subsidies and in cost of management, it is likely that Alberta would allow one to offset the other and take the lands without an accounting. The position of Saskatchewan is different. The lands there do not produce or promise so much revenue and the province will try to get the land and also to retain part of the subsidy in lieu of lands alienated. Manitoba's claims are on a different basis from those of the provinces created later.

It may be that the Dominion will have to deal with each province separately. 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 surrender by the province of the consideration under which they were conveyed to the Dominion, British Columbia has a large interest in the decision.

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