

351,873, Ontario 260,862, Manitoba 73,732, and British Columbia 372,639, or a total area for the seven provinces of confederation of 1,110,931 miles. Now, the Territories which are to-day under the control and jurisdiction of the local legislature have exactly the same area as that of the seven provinces of the Dominion. The total area of the seven provinces, as I said a moment ago is 1,110,931 miles and the area of the different territories is as follows:

	Miles.
Assinibola.....	88,879
Saskatchewan.....	107,618
Alberta.....	191,583
Athabaska.....	251,985
Mackenzie.....	562,182
Total.....	1,112,227

Or, an area a little greater than the total area of the seven provinces of the Dominion. Now, as I have said there is a great variety in the sizes of our provinces; in fact, it is very much with the Canadian Confederation as with the American Union. There are in the Canadian Confederation provinces of unequal sizes as there are in the American Union states of unequal sizes. It is not a fatal fault as has been proved by the history of the American Union, but I believe that when provinces are not the result of historic tradition, when they have not come to us formed and when we have the control of events, it is preferable that the provinces should be as near as possible about the same size. Therefore, it is impossible to suppose that this immense territory of 1,112,527 miles should be formed into one single province. There is another objection. The territories are naturally divided into two portions from the point of view of agriculture, climate, and productions generally, the northern portion and the southern portion, and I would place the boundary of these two sections a little south of the boundary which now divides the provisional district of Mackenzie from the provisional district of Athabaska. This northern portion of the continent has not yet been fully explored, but still we know enough of it, there has been enough exploration of it and it has been travelled over sufficiently, to make us sure that it is absolutely unfit for agriculture. The climate is too cold and the soil is too poor. There are, however, very excellent and very promising indications of mineral wealth in that district. There are indications to-day of petroleum, coal, gold, copper and other minerals, and perhaps some day we may have in what is to-day a barren section, another Yukon. But we know by the experience of the past that mineral wealth, when not coupled with agriculture, is but a precarious ground on which to found the hope of thick and permanent settlement. Therefore, we put aside this northern sec-

tion; but the southern section is of an absolutely different character.

MR. H. L. BORDEN. What does the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) refer to exactly?

SIR WILFRID LAURIER. I would divide the two sections at about the line which now divides the provisional district of Mackenzie and the provisional district of Athabaska, about the 60th parallel of north latitude.

The southern section is of a different character. It is absolutely an agricultural country, and I need not say that it is one of the finest in the world to-day. It is traversed by large rivers flowing from the Rocky mountains to Hudson's bay, and the valley of the Saskatchewan is, as every one knows, equal in fertility to the valley of the Red river. Everybody knows also that the valley of the Red river and the valley of the Saskatchewan are to-day the most fertile wheat fields under the sun. We propose to give autonomy, not to the whole of the Territories, but to that section which extends from the American boundary up to the boundary line between the provisional district of Mackenzie and the provisional district of Athabaska, that is the 60th parallel of north latitude.

When we were first approached on this subject, it was proposed to us that we should make a province extending from the American boundary up to the 57th parallel, that is to say, somewhat to the south of the provisional boundary between the provisional districts of Mackenzie and Athabaska, but we thought it preferable to take in the whole district of Athabaska. The reason for this is, that although Athabaska is not considered to be a fertile country, and the eastern portion of it is barren, the western portion, the valley of the Peace river, is equal to the valley of the Saskatchewan and settlement there is already proceeding rapidly. There are to-day on the Peace river two grist mills, provided absolutely from wheat grown in the Peace river valley, and therefore we have decided to include within the new provinces the provisional district of Athabaska. The area of these two provinces together will be about 550,345 square miles. This is, in our estimation, altogether too large an area to be made into one single province according to the size of the other provinces, the largest of which is British Columbia, and the next largest Quebec, British Columbia with an area of 372,000 square miles and Quebec with an area of 351,000 square miles. By dividing it into two you have two provinces of 275,000 square miles in round numbers, each about the size of the province of Ontario. If any of the members of the House will care to look at the map, they will see that we have put the provisional boundary on the fourth meridian and according to our present information, this will give about the same