

very subject as to the retention of the lands by the province of Manitoba, Sir John Macdonald used these words:

The success of the undertaking by the Dominion Government in and for the Northwest, depends largely upon the settlement of the lands. Combined with a great expenditure in organizing and maintaining an immigration service abroad and at home, Parliament pledged its faith to the world that a large portion of those lands should be set apart for free homesteads to all coming settlers, and another portion to be held in trust for the education of their children. No transfer could, therefore, be made, without exacting from the province the most ample securities that this pledged policy shall be maintained; hence in so far as the free lands extend there would be no monetary advantage to the province, whilst a transfer would seriously embarrass all the costly immigration operations which the Dominion Government is making mainly in behalf of Manitoba and the territories.

The great attraction which the Canadian Government now offers, the impressive fact to the mind of the men contemplating immigration is that a well-known and recognized government holds unfettered in its own hands the lands which it offers free, and that that government has its agencies and organizations for directing, receiving, transporting and placing the immigrant upon the homestead which he may select. And if the immigration operations of the Dominion, which involve so large a cost, are to have continued success and to be of advantage to Manitoba and the Northwest territories, your sub-committee deem it to be of the utmost importance that the Dominion Government shall retain and control the lands which it has proclaimed free to all comers. Were there other considerations of sufficient force to induce them to recommend their transfer to Manitoba, and as a consequence and by precedent the surrender to the provinces to be created from the Northwest territories, all the lands within their boundaries, then they would advise that the provinces holding the lands should conduct their own immigration operations at their own expense.

These views impressed themselves strongly upon me, and so I made them the basis of the Acts creating the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. I supposed, of course, that the views of the man who, of all men, had built up the Conservative party and given it a policy would be accepted by his followers. In this, however, I was sadly mistaken. My right hon. friend, then sitting where I now sit, supported the proposition made by one of his followers that these lands, contrary to the judgment of Sir John Macdonald, should be taken from the control of the Dominion and handed over to the control of the provinces.

But, Sir, I am surprised at the position the right hon. gentleman takes with regard to the Maritime provinces. If the policy which he then advocated had been adopted and the lands given to the provinces of

Alberta and Saskatchewan, what right would the Maritime provinces have had to say a word? He settled that question by supporting a resolution, moved by Mr. Lake one of his followers, without reference to the Maritime provinces.

But there is another point, and one to which I will return later, and that is that we gave to the two provinces a money compensation in lieu of lands. We thought the compensation we gave them was ample, sufficient and reasonable, and I still believe it to have been so. If these terms, once established, are to be altered, I can understand very well that the Maritime provinces might feel that they should have something to say. But in 1905 we had to choose between giving money or giving lands, and the same interest on the part of the Maritime provinces was not created.

My right hon. friend at that time argued very strongly that the lands should be given to Alberta and Saskatchewan, and he made that question an issue in the elections—and he won. Then he had an opportunity of applying the Halifax platform. We do hear sometimes of the Halifax platform—not very often. My right hon. friend himself is about the only one who speaks of it; the thing has been shelved and forgotten and now lies under the dust almost as of ages. But in the Halifax platform he declared that the western provinces should have control of their lands. If there was any soundness in that policy, it applies not only to Saskatchewan and Alberta but to Manitoba also. Within twelve months of the time when he took office, he had the opportunity of settling the boundaries of Manitoba. He gave Manitoba, properly, a very large extent of territory; but did he give control of the lands to Manitoba? Not at all. I said a moment ago that the right hon. gentleman had forgotten the teachings of Sir John Macdonald. But he changed his own teachings and his own mind and retained under control of the Dominion the lands within the territory added to the area of Manitoba. But he did more than that; he took back from the province of Manitoba the swamp lands which had been given to that province by the Government of Sir John Macdonald in 1885. Therefore he went back most completely on the policy which he had adopted and which he had pledged himself by everything that was sacred to carry out. I am not in the secrets of the party, but we judge men, of course, by their actions. It was in the city of Brandon that he pledged himself that if the Conservative party came to

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]