

indulgence of the House, to proceed to the discussion of the sections we have before us—the original section and the amended section—and to give the reasons which have guided me in coming to the conclusion at which I have arrived as to the support of this Bill or otherwise. I am in a somewhat peculiar position, Mr. Speaker, finding as I do that I agree much more with the statements of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) than with the statements and arguments of my right hon. friend the leader of the government who is my party leader and who was my leader in the government for so many years. Nevertheless, the conclusion at which I arrived will probably not be the same as that of the hon. leader of the opposition. In the first place let me say that I think he was wrong in his view—and I agree with my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) in this—that when we are about to consider legislation which will bring a certain state of affairs into existence in the Northwest Territories, we should shut our eyes absolutely and entirely to the examination of the actual educational effect of the proposal before us. It seems to me that almost everybody will agree with my hon. friend the Minister of Finance that the man in the street, hearing the hon. gentleman who leads the opposition say that he stands by the constitution, and hearing the right hon. gentleman who leads the government say that upon the rock of the constitution he stands, and seeing these two hon. gentlemen both standing on the rock of the constitution but coming to diametrically opposite conclusions will be likely to say: I cannot hope to understand the law or the constitution, but I do want to know what kind of schools they are going to have in the Northwest Territories. Therefore, I desire to address a few words to the House upon that which I think will interest not only the man in the street, but some of the men in the House upon the subject of the nature of the schools we have in the Northwest and the kind of schools we shall have after this Bill is passed. I am not going to enter into questions as to the manner in which legislation has been passed or the remarks which have been made by legislators when it has been passed. My right hon. friend the leader of the government, in the remarks which he made to the House upon two occasions, or at least upon the first occasion, discussed at length the method under which the educational legislation affecting the Northwest Territories was first introduced. That discussion has been amplified by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance in the remarks which he made the other evening, and I shall not attempt to add anything to what my hon. friend the Minister of Finance has said or to what I believe to be the accurate discussion which we have listened to on that subject. But, I do desire to call the attention of hon. members

MR. SIFTON.

of the House, for the purposes of my argument, to the actual terms of the Act of 1875. The clause which is the basis of all that has followed reads as follows:

When and so soon as any system of taxation shall be adopted in any district or portion of the Northwest Territories, the Lieutenant Governor, by and with the consent of the council or assembly, as the case may be, shall pass all necessary ordinances in respect to education, but it shall therein be always provided that a majority of the ratepayers of any district or portion of the Northwest Territories, or any lesser portion or subdivision thereof, by whatever name the same may be known, may establish such schools therein as they may think fit, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor; and, further, that the minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish separate schools therein, and that in such latter case the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic separate schools shall be liable only to assessments of such rates as they may impose upon themselves in respect thereof.

That was the clause in the Act of 1875. I read it because it is important in view of the remarks I intend to address to the House, that its exact terms should be in the minds of the gentlemen who are honouring me with their attention.

What followed the passage of this law? There was established in the Northwest Territories a complete dual system of schools; a system of schools under which the denomination regulated the text books, and the conduct of the schools and by which everything that appertained to the Roman Catholic schools was directly under the control of a Roman Catholic board of education. We had in the Northwest Territories at that time, under that Act, to all intents and purposes what are generally known as church schools or clerically controlled schools. That was the system that was built up under this Act of 1875. It went on for some time. It was exactly the same system—I do not know as to the efficiency, for I am not familiar with that—but in principle it was the same system we had in Manitoba up to the year 1890, when it was abolished by the Public School Act of that year. This system went on for some time in the Territories, and then the legislature began to interfere and to curtail the privileges of the separate schools. This curtailment proceeded from time to time until the year 1892 when what was known as the dual system was entirely swept away and that system which we have in the Northwest Territories, substantially as we have it at present, was established. I am not going to trouble the House with any lengthy quotations, but I desire to point out what was conceived by the people of the Northwest Territories connected with these schools, to be the effect of the legislation of 1892. The quotations which I shall give will be found in the papers presented to the federal government when a