

originally introduced and as amended. That hon. gentleman, in speaking upon this subject, is reported in 'Hansard,' page 2692, to have used this language :

My hon. friend the member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) has spoken of the 500,000 people in the Northwest who ought to be consulted. I have no desire to introduce unnecessarily controversial matter, but I ask him in all earnestness—and when I do so I ask him to remember the speeches he made in this House in 1896 which I read then and have read only quite recently—I ask him in all earnestness: have we no regard to pay in the settlement of that delicate question, to the opinion, the honest convictions of over forty per cent of the population of this Dominion? I say that there are deep seated prejudices being aroused, passions being inflamed, and the desire, I am quite convinced, of every man in this House is that peace should reign supreme throughout this land. All I say now, and I speak for myself, is that there can be no peace except that peace which is based on justice; there can be no peace except that peace which is based on equal rights and respect for the honest convictions of every man in this country.

Well, Mr. Speaker, one, I think, might naturally conclude that the honest convictions, as they have been evidenced by the action of the people of the Northwest Territories ever since the Dominion Act of 1875 forced separate schools upon them, should be accorded the first consideration. But it appears that it is only the religious convictions and sectarian desires of the minority, of the 41 per cent, mostly resident in the province of Quebec, and not of the 59 per cent to which the government sees fit to give ear. The probable consequence of the passage of these Bills and their confirmation, if confirmed by the imperial authorities, as foreshadowed by the hon. member for Brandon, will be an effort on the part of the legislatures of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan to free themselves from a hateful restraint, from an odious burden. There will be appeals to the Governor General, remedial orders and possibly Remedial Bills if any political party in Canada can be induced to take up such a fight. Certainly the Conservative party, after the experience of 1896, will hardly be induced, at all events, will have little reason to induce them to adopt such a course. Yet, as was ever the case, the government and its followers talk of the opposition and the press of Protestant Canada as stirring up bitterness and racial and religious strife. It seems to me that insincerity, intolerance and disregard for the law could hardly go farther. Let me advert to another instance of the right hon. First Minister's absolute and complete autonomy. It is found in clause 20 of these Bills by which the right hon. First Minister refuses to hand over the crown lands to the proposed new provinces. I think that there was an excuse in the oft cited case of Manitoba. That country was then absolutely new. It was familiarly referred to in old Canada as the great lone

land and was practically uninhabited. At that time land and immigration policies had to be formulated. Europe had to be reached and educated as to our landed estate in that country. That has now all been done. Immigration will continue to flow into that country as long as there are unoccupied lands. Surely the Territories are more competent than the Dominion to administer the lands of the great west. The experimental stage is now passed and the government on the ground is surely more competent to deal with the subject both of land and immigration in the west than a government 2,000 or 3,000 miles away, just as the Liberal party in days gone by contended that the Canadian government was more competent to deal with Canadian affairs than was Downing street. No doubt, however, the government considers it good party politics to maintain its vast army of land officials as a standing party force for election purposes. The large foreign element, which will increase in that region, can as it becomes naturalized, thus be more effectually taught to vote for the party under whom it holds its lands. In my humble opinion it is not a good defence that was raised by the right hon. gentleman himself when he said that this parliament had paid for and purchased these lands. The Hudson Bay Company never owned the fee and all that it can be contended it passed or that it granted to the Dominion was the mere right of occupancy for certain purposes connected with the business in which that company was engaged. All this is quite apart from the long line of judicial decisions of the highest status cited by my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) and my hon. friend from East Hastings (Mr. Northrup), in the course of their eloquent addresses on this subject, showing, that the Crown holds these lands in right of the provinces and that the provinces are therefore entitled to them. Then, by way of rendering autonomy to the provinces beyond question complete and absolute, we have clause 23 of these Bills leaving in full force the Canadian Pacific Railway right to full exemption from all powers of taxation, provincial or municipal, for all time. I might also draw attention to the fact that these Bills make no provision as to the subject of irrigation in the west, although the right hon. First Minister had before him in framing these Bills the draft Bill of the Hon. Mr. Haultain, which showed in section 10 and its explanatory notes the very great importance which that hon. gentleman, who is well acquainted with the needs of the Northwest, placed upon that subject. On the whole it appears to me that instead of granting his much vaunted absolute and complete autonomy to the new provinces the right hon. gentleman is not granting any autonomy at all other than in name; in fact, a not unfitting title for these Bills might be 'autonomy, how not to grant it.'