

The petition for the erection of a separate school district shall be signed by three resident ratepayers of the religious faith indicated in the name of the proposed district; and shall be in the form prescribed by the commissioner. The persons qualified to vote for or against the erection of a separate school district shall be the ratepayers in the district of the same religious faith, Protestants or Roman Catholic as the petitioners.

The notice calling a meeting of the ratepayers for the purpose of taking their votes on the petition for the erection of a separate school district shall be in the form prescribed by the commissioner, and the proceedings subsequent to the posting of such notice shall be the same as prescribed in the formation of public school districts.

After the establishment of a separate school district under the provisions of this ordinance, such separate school district and the board thereof shall possess and exercise all rights, powers, privileges and be subject to the same liabilities and method of government as is herein provided in respect of public school districts.

Any person who is legally assessed or assessable for a public school will not be liable to assessment for any separate school established therein.

My right hon. colleague, the Prime Minister, in introducing the Bill said its object was to secure to the minority what they now enjoy, namely, the right to have their own schools, to assess themselves for the cost of these schools, and to receive their equitable and proportionate share of the public grants for school purposes. My hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice, also declared that to be the object and intent of the Bill. It was contended, however, by some that there might be a broader construction placed upon the general Bill than was intended, as explained by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice, and to meet that objection, the clauses were amended so as to re-enact the existing provisions of the law and thus prevent any dispute in the future. It must be borne in mind that those separate schools are formed precisely as every school district is formed. Although the name separate school appears to convey to the minds of some people the impression that they are separate in the sense in which they are established in some other province, there is no distinction between these schools and the other public schools as regards organization, or the qualification of teachers, or the text books, or the right of state to inspection, or in the reports they have to make. In every respect they are under the commissioner of education in absolutely the same manner as is every other public school in the Territories. All they get is what? If they desire it, provided they have the requisite number of children of school age, they may upon petitioning the commissioners be permitted by them to erect a school district, pay for it out of their own pockets, and get only their share of the money they contribute. Is not

that fair? Is there anything wrong or unjust in that? Point out to me if you can anything more fair. Oh, but you tell me, they may give religious instruction in these schools. Very true, but let us read the clauses. There are three sections dealing with that subject and I shall read them:

137. No religious instruction except as hereinafter provided, shall be permitted in the school of any district from the opening of such school until one-half hour previous to its closing in the afternoon, after which time any such instruction permitted or desired by the board may be given.

138. Any child shall have the privilege of leaving the school-room at the time at which religious instruction is commenced as provided in the next preceding section or of remaining without taking part in any religious instruction may be given, if the parent or guardians so desire.

139. No teacher, school trustee or inspector, shall in any way attempt to deprive such child of any advantage that it may derive from the ordinary education given in such school, and any such action on the part of any school trustee, inspector or teacher shall be held to be a disqualification for and a voidance of the office held by him.

These are all the sections of the Act, as far as I am aware, that relate to public instruction. In the separate schools from nine o'clock in the morning until noon and from 1.30 until 3.30 p.m. no religious instruction is to be given to the children. Precisely the same course of study that is followed in the public schools is to be followed in these schools; but when the hour of 3.30 p.m. arrives, if the trustees of the separate school desire, religious instruction may then be given to the youth therein. Is that a concession made particularly to our Roman Catholic brethren? Why, the same clauses apply to every school, Protestant, public and every other. No special right, no special permission is given the separate schools which is withheld from the other. Shall it be made a reproach to our Roman Catholic brethren that it be a matter of conscience with them, that they instil into the minds of their youth the principles of the Christian religion? Is that something to be deplored? The trustees of any school may avail themselves of those clauses and have religious instruction given to the pupils. I do not wish to intrude my personal views upon this House, but speaking for myself alone, I would desire if it could be accomplished—and it seems to me that it ought not to be impossible in these days of broad-minded charity among the various denominations—that some agreement might be come to under which certain portions of the Bible might be read and studied in the public schools of these Territories, if the trustees so desire. I am very sure that no child would be injured thereby. I am quite sure that no harm would thereby be caused any of the thousands of people now going into that country, many more or less indif-