

petuated, then it rests with the free will of the legislatures of the Northwest either to perpetuate the present system or to change it. It stands to common sense that if the law is as mild and as gentle and as inoffensive as hon. gentlemen opposite say it is, no legislature in the new provinces is going to step in and take away from the people the small measure of separate schools that is given them under that constitution. Remove the objection and you preserve the self-respect and honour of the people of those great Territories; perpetuate coercion, and you bring about a struggle in every province of the Dominion, because the people of the province of Quebec are by no means a unit in favour of coercion. They have shown in 1896 that they are not in favour of coercion, and if you give them an opportunity, I believe they will show again that they are not in favour of coercion no more than are the people of Ontario. There is not even a suggestion of tyranny and the freemen of Quebec will not hesitate to record their votes against tyranny just the same as the freemen of Ontario. I have no further desire to discuss this matter until it reaches the committee stage but I would appeal, as I appealed in the earlier part of my address, to the right hon. Prime Minister to remove this coercive clause. If his contention is right he has all he wants in the Bill without the coercion at all. If his contention is wrong I want to point out to him that the Act of 1875 will be part of the laws of the new provinces until the legislatures meet and change it and it must be supposed that the Roman Catholic minority in these Territories will have a far greater chance of succeeding by the kindly means I have outlined than they will by attempting coercion of that country.

Mr. J. G. TURRIFF (East Assiniboia). Mr. Speaker, as the Bill now before the House deals particularly with the part of the country that I come from, and as I represent one of the largest and most populous districts there, I do not feel that I would be justified in casting a silent vote on this measure. I would therefore ask the indulgence of this House for a short time—and it shall be a very short time—while I give the reasons why I intend to give this Bill my full and hearty support. I do not intend to follow the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sam. Hughes) who has just spoken through his long and rambling speech. He has gone all over the United States, he has gone all over the British Isles, he has gone through the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba and he has dealt with almost every subject under the sun except those subjects which are mentioned in the Bill which we are now discussing. I intend to discuss the subjects which are mentioned in this Bill. During the discussion that has taken place, so far I have noticed

on the part of almost everybody who has spoken a desire to make this a school question. I do not wish for one moment to minimize the importance of the school clauses of this Bill. On the contrary, I would say that they are very important. The education of the youth of any country is of the first importance, but this is only one of the subjects dealt with by this Bill and there are others of equal, and to my mind as a representative of that western country of even greater importance. Mr. Speaker, I notice that hon. members from other provinces, especially from the province of Ontario, seem to take a tremendous interest in that particular question. I am very glad to see that hon. members do not treat this question from a local standpoint, but I would think that when the people of the Northwest Territories are satisfied it ought to be pretty good ground why the people of the other provinces should also be satisfied.

Some time ago, before this Bill was read a second time, the hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) was very anxious to have the matter discussed, and so was the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster), and we heard a great deal about dissension in the government ranks from the hon. member for North Toronto. But, Mr. Speaker, we do not hear very much about that now. Why? Because the right hon. Prime Minister of this country (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), is coming before the country and before this House with this Bill with practically a solid support behind his back. We do not hear anything about dissension now simply because when the hon. leader of the opposition came down to the second reading of the Bill he was not able to say that he was leading the opposition. He said that he was leading himself and that was all he was doing because every hon. member behind him was going his own way. The members from the Northwest have been criticised, and criticised very severely, especially before the second reading of this Bill, by the hon. member for North Toronto. We were told we were simply a flock of sheep, that we were dumb, that we had been muzzled, that we had been told by the right hon. Prime Minister to get out of the House so that we would not be called upon to say anything—This was before the second reading of the Bill. He apparently was fishing for information and on that occasion he seemed to be endeavouring to show hon. members on the other side of the House how better he could fish than the hon. leader of the opposition who was sitting beside him. He criticised us very severely and while he was calling us dumb followers I could not help thinking that it would have been well for him if some kind friend had put a muzzle on him on some occasions in the past so that he would not have been in the position that he is in to-day of having his old leader in the other House giving the