

judging by his seeming uncomfortableness during this whole discussion. The hon. gentleman has told us that he has not been pressed by his followers into assuming his present position, and we must accept his word for it. It would appear then that the hon. gentleman has acted a little bit of the role of a Czar, which we have heard so much about from the hon. member for South York (Mr. Maclean), the leader of the opposition has acted like the dictator which those who read the Toronto 'World' saw described in its columns the other day.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I hope you read it.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. Certainly, but I take an antidote afterwards. The Canadian House of Commons bears the same relation to the legislature of the Northwest, as the imperial parliament bore towards the Canadian colonies in 1867. These Territories were acquired by the right of conquest, and with them this parliament acquired the power to legislate for their future welfare, but, did the Northwest Territories really enter the union in 1870, as is claimed by Mr. Haultain? Canada was not then treating with independent sovereign provinces, as in the case of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia. There was no compact with these Territories, there was no synallagmatic contract, but merely the taking possession of a portion of territory. That western country had no power to treat with us; the claims of the half-breeds that they had that power were not listened to. It would be fairer to say that since 1870 the Northwest belonged to the union, but was not a party to the compact entered into in 1867. The Territories in 1870 were given a provisional constitution it is true, but it was a transitory constitution without provincial rights and there was an acknowledgment of our sovereignty. It was even argued, here, that the Northwest Territories had not the right to send members and senators to the Dominion parliament, and I need not quote the speech of the Hon. Mr. Mills in 1875 to that effect. But, Sir, the surest proof that these Territories are not a part of the union is that they have not autonomy, and that to-day, without their consent, their domain is being divided into two new provinces. Even take the Bill as presented to this House and you will see that the date of the union is at the time of the passing of this Act.

We have heard a good deal about provincial rights in this House. May I ask, where are the provincial rights that are wronged in this matter? Where are the provinces that have provincial rights? They do not yet exist, and even were there any provinces existing to-day their rights in the matter of education would be limited in

matters of education as are the rights of any other province in the confederation by the British North America Act. Canada has now to deal with her own property, and so we are going to create new provinces and to give them a constitution. I say, Sir, that it is most important that we should give them a constitution which shall be in accordance with the spirit of confederation, and in doing so we must not forget that these lands of the Northwest have been acquired, not by Protestant Canada, but by the Canadian confederation, French and English, Protestant and Catholic. And, Sir, in view of the condition of certain minds in the country and in view of the agitation, fomented by certain narrow spirits it is most expedient that in giving these Territories autonomy there should be a clear and precise declaration as to what is confederation and what is the spirit of the British North America Act—not a milk and water declaration, but a declaration, clear and precise as the principle on which union has been established, so that the question may be settled for ever, so that the government of these provinces shall be protected, not only against agitators from the outside, but against itself.

We have been told, Sir, many a time that we should trust the majority. This might be true in Quebec, but considering what has been done in the Territories since 1875 how can we trust the majority there? I need not quote the ordinances passed in 1892, or the ordinances passed in 1901, for we have the speech of the Minister of Finance and we have the speech of the ex-Minister of the Interior—a man who ought to know—in testimony that separate schools in the Northwest exist only in name and not in fact. The Minister of Finance has told us that from the hour of the opening of the school, in the morning until half past three in the afternoon the separate schools and the public schools in the Northwest Territories are exactly the same. Let me quote the opinion of Archbishop Taché on this point:

More astute than the Manitoba government, the one of the Territories has left the Catholics their existence, but he has robbed them of what constitutes their special character, and assures their liberty of action.

Now, as to what separate schools ought to be, I shall cite the opinion of Lord Watson. He is a highly educated man, a man learned in the law, a man tolerant and broad minded and his opinion ought to be worth something to us at this juncture. En passant, I may say that I wish our hon. friends opposite would read a little more as to what is going on in Great Britain and a little less as to what is going on in the United States, if they want to form a correct view on Canadian political or social issues. Is it not strange to see the loyalists on the other side of the House being taught the British spirit