

On January 31st, 1903, Mr. Haultain wrote a letter to Hon. Clifford Sifton in which he referred to his election address, and said:

The people have decided, and their decision is founded on the fact that not only am I offered the support of a greater portion of the members of the house than I have ever had before, but also twenty-four out of twenty-five members of the last house who sought re-election and who all voted 'yea' on the resolution of May 2nd, 1900, were returned at the top of the polls in their respective districts.

That is to say, that this Bill which was submitted by Premier Haultain continuing the system of separate schools in the Northwest was supported by certain representatives in the Northwest assembly, and that twenty-four out of twenty-five of those who voted for that system were returned at the head of the poll in their respective districts. That being the case, surely it does not lie in the mouths of hon. gentlemen opposite to say that the voice of a free people has been stifled and that the people of the Northwest are being treated as children. The hon. member for North Toronto says that they are being treated as if they were in swaddling clothes and without intelligence. I do not think the people of the Northwest Territories, as free electors will appreciate such words indicating that they do not know their own business. Surely, in the next election to take place in the Northwest Territories, the people will resent these imputations. In his letter to Hon. Clifford Sifton, Mr. Haultain goes on:

I will go further and say that the people of the Territories practically unanimously voted for the establishment of the country upon a provincial basis. The manner in which that is to be done, to again quote from my address, 'is a question which in the last resort is one for the Dominion government to settle.

That is to say, it is for this parliament to say how far we shall accede to Mr. Haultain's view, what changes we will make in regard to the lands, or in regard to any controversial subject, and whether there shall be one or two provinces. He admits that it remains to this House to say, in the last resort, what the form of the constitution shall be which is to be granted to the Northwest Territories.

In this letter to Mr. Sifton he goes on to say:

At the request of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in my letter of December 7, 1901, I placed on record the views of the government of the Territories as to the matters which should receive consideration, and at the same time condensed those views in the form of a draft Bill. Since then, with the full knowledge of the facts, the people of the Territories have elected new representatives, a large majority of whom support and approve these terms.

Now I contend that it does not lie in the mouth of any gentleman in this House or of any newspaper in this country to say

that the people of the Northwest have not been consulted, that they have not had an opportunity of expressing their views on this subject, because, in the most solemn manner in which a free people may express their views, they have declared their wish that the Northwest ordinances should be continued as part of the law of their province, and they do not desire the leader of the opposition to import into their constitution any power to exclusively make laws with relation to education. Of course we can readily understand that when Mr. Haultain came down here and got among his Tory confreres he did not want to be open to the charge, when he went back to the Northwest, that he had swallowed himself body and bones under the influences of the leader of the opposition and of his fellow-Conservatives, when they met in room No. 3, and sent that letter; he did not wish to be open to the charge of swallowing himself, and so we find him saying, in this interview with the 'Globe' of February 25, 1902:

The present system is working out as we wanted it, and there is no indication that there is a desire to change it. I am satisfied with the way in which it is working. If I were dictator to-morrow I would not change it.

Therefore, speaking for the people of the Northwest Territories in regard to the educational clauses of that Bill, he expresses himself as perfectly satisfied that they shall remain in the constitution, and says that if he were dictator to-morrow he would not change the school law of the Northwest Territories. Therefore, I say, we are bound by every sense of honour and decency to continue in the new constitution the system which has been approved of by the people of the Northwest Territories.

Now then, with regard to the power of this parliament to pass this law I think there can be no question whatever. Under the British North America Act, 1871, express power was given to this parliament to create out of the Territories new provinces containing such provisions for the constitution and administration of such provinces and for the passage of laws for the peace, order and good government of the provinces, as this parliament might see fit. I contend that under this Act this parliament has full jurisdiction to create these provinces, and inasmuch as we have full power to create these provinces, I say we should not involve them at the outset in a great lawsuit in order to determine what rights they possess under the new constitution, but we should take pains now to express them as clearly as we can. I can readily understand that the creation of lawsuits and constitutional difficulties has been part of the political capital of hon. members opposite in the past, and that they would no doubt like to continue that policy in the