

is some evidence that it was not passed in excess of the powers conferred on the legislature. At all events the school law of the Territories as it exists to-day is absolutely a school law that has been given to the people by their own representatives in their own legislature. It has been absolutely satisfactory, and if the people of Canada, especially the people of Ontario, knew just exactly what that school system is, there would be no complaint against it. I ask the people of Ontario to leave it to the people of the Northwest, and if the people of the Northwest, through their local legislature and through their members in this parliament are satisfied with the existing conditions—and I think these conditions are about as nearly right as you can possibly get them—then, what necessity is there for the people of Ontario agitating the question?

We have heard a good deal about education in the province of Quebec. I was born and brought up and lived in that province until I reached the age of manhood. What education I received in school I received at a public school in a small Scottish settlement surrounded by French Canadians and Roman Catholics for a hundred miles east and west. To that school down there we paid our own taxes, we paid not one cent of taxes to any other school, and the Roman Catholic majority left us absolutely free to do just as we liked. I don't forget that.

Mr. SCOTT. You had autonomy?

Mr. TURRIFF. Yes, the Protestant minority had full autonomy there. There was the greatest tolerance towards us; intolerance I never saw in any shape or form in that province. Would it not be very small on the part of us Protestants because we are in the majority in the Northwest Territories, that we should not give some freedom to the Roman Catholic minority. The member for west Assiniboia has pointed out that when the Act of 1875 was passed in this parliament its intention was as much to protect Protestants as to protect Roman Catholics, because at that date nobody knew whether the majority in the Northwest was going to be Protestant or going to be Roman Catholic. And, because the Protestants now happen to be in the majority, are we going to deprive the Roman Catholic minority of the protection which the federal parliament in its wisdom gave to the minority? Although the Act of 1875 was passed by a Liberal government it was assented to unanimously by every member of the Conservative party then in opposition. I am not well versed in constitutional law, but there is this that cannot be denied: that from 1875 to the present day the Roman Catholic minority have had the right to have separate schools in the Territories. I believe that their rights were diminished by the ordinance of

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1892, but at all events the minority have had the right to separate schools from 1875 to the present time. Would it be fair or would it be reasonable on our part; when we have made these schools practically public schools, when we have eliminated all clerical and church control, when we have made these schools in every respect equal to the public schools, when we know that there our Roman Catholic children will get the same sound education they get in the public schools; would it be fair, would it be generous to wipe out,—as the hon. member for Jacques Cartier has said—the last shred of the rights of the minority conferred upon them in 1875? I claim that it would be neither just nor fair, and in saying this I am voicing the sentiments of my constituents with possibly the exception of an odd man here and there, and that only because during the last month or so efforts have been made to make the people believe that we are now fastening a system of separate schools on them. If I understand the matter aright, what we are doing is fastening a system of public schools on the Territories, and we are making it clear that if the Conservatives come into power ten or fifteen years from now, they will not be able to do to the Territories what they tried to do to the province of Manitoba. The hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Sam. Hughes) said that the class of immigrants coming into this country were chiefly noted for ignorance, dirt and filth, I have had something to do with the immigrants coming into Canada for the past few years, and I know whereof I speak. I presume the hon. gentleman did not refer to the immigrants from the British Isles or from the United States, but I can say—

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. member (Mr. Turriff) is doing the member for Victoria an injustice. The member for Victoria (Mr. Sam. Hughes) referred to the immigration coming to the United States for years and years, and he pointed out what the system of schools in that country had accomplished in the fusion of the races.

Mr. TURRIFF. I would be the last man in the House to misrepresent a member, and especially in his absence. As I could not hear the hon. gentleman very well from the seat which I occupied, possibly I may have misunderstood him, so that I shall not speak further on that point. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have taken up more time than I intended, but in conclusion I wish to say that I would ask hon. gentlemen opposite not to push this agitation further. If hon. gentlemen opposite think that we Liberal members from the west do not represent the sentiment of the people of the Northwest Territories though I claim that we do, I make this proposition to them. The Hon. Mr. Haultain is working in unison with them, is trying to help them out in every way, is doing his utmost to make this a party question in the Northwest. Let them get Mr. Haultain to call his legis-