

jority, the minority being compelled to conform thereto. But, on representations being made to the Mercier government that this worked against the interests of the Protestant minority, that was changed, and now we find it provided that the erection or alteration of school boundaries shall apply only to the Roman Catholics or to the Protestants of the territory affected. So, if in the erection of a new municipality the limits are not acceptable to the minority, the minority do not need to conform to them, but may have limits of their own.

As I said a few moments ago, I have been for ten years a member of the Council of Public Instruction, Protestant section, of the province of Quebec. We meet four times a year and sometimes sit for several days. At our meetings we discuss every detail of the educational system of the province of Quebec. I can say without fear of contradiction that, during the ten years of my service, we have never had to consider a single case where there was a grievance caused by unjust or unfair treatment on the part of the majority towards the Protestant minority. We have no difficulty in the province of Quebec in getting along together and living in harmony with one another, and dealing with some of these very difficult questions without heat and without friction. A short time ago a question was raised in the city of Montreal with reference to the care of those suffering from contagious diseases. It was found impossible to agree to have a common hospital, so it was decided that there should be two hospitals, the Roman Catholic children suffering from measles, scarlatina and other diseases of that kind, to be sent to one, and the Protestant children similarly afflicted to be sent to another. Well what was the result? Although three-quarters of the population of Montreal is Roman Catholic and only one-quarter Protestants, when it became necessary to make contracts for the carrying out of the agreement, the representatives of the Protestant hospitals were given a twenty-five year contract at \$15,000 a year for taking care of the non-Roman Catholic children and others who might be afflicted with contagious diseases, while the Roman Catholics were given \$15,000 for a similar term to take care of the Roman Catholics who were taken down with these diseases—absolutely the same treatment to both sides.

So, Mr. Speaker, it would ill become one who represents the Protestant minority of Quebec, one who has never had reason to find serious fault with the treatment in educational matters that has been given that section of the community—I say it would come with very bad grace if we who represent the Protestant minority in Quebec should be parties to legislation intended to lessen the privileges of a minority found elsewhere, and similarly situated. We have no fear of reprisals in the province of Quebec—it is not because we fear that if we

take any other stand than the one we do that our privileges will be curtailed—not that. The liberties we enjoy in the province of Quebec are guaranteed by the British North America Act. For, as we know subsection 2 of section 93 provides that subsequent legislation becomes fixed and cannot be altered. I am not attempting to give great credit for the fact that the legislation has not been altered, but for the fact that in carrying out that legislation we have been given more than was in the bond and have no reason to complain either of the generosity or justice of the treatment accorded us.

It has been stated at times in this House that there exists much hardship in certain regions in the province of Quebec. If I had time I might go into that. But I wish to point out briefly that this is not due primarily to the school system but to a series of circumstances of which the school system is but one. Fifty years ago in the eastern townships, of every 1,000 of the population, 658 were English and only 342 were French. To-day, of every 1,000, 314 are English and 686 French. In other words the proportions of the population in the twelve so-called eastern townships is completely reversed. The Protestants were two-thirds of the population fifty years ago, to-day they are but one-third. It will be readily seen that where a population is coming in or going out there will be a period when there are but few representatives of one class, and, at that time, there will be a certain degree of hardship. So we find, from time to time, that a school municipality ceases to exist. And if you take up the Quebec 'Official Gazette,' you will find obituary notices stating that in this or that municipality the Protestant school has ceased to exist. It is sad we all admit it; we hate to see the schools die. Yet, as a matter of fact, there has been no falling off in the number of Protestant elementary schools, in fact, they have shown a satisfactory increase in the last twenty years. There were 797 in 1883, 878 in 1893, and 898 in 1903. But the dying out of schools here and there arises from conditions not chargeable to the school law, for that law makes every effort to keep a dying school alive as long as possible. A school can unite with its neighbour, or several sections can join forces. Or they can consolidate the schools and bring the children together by means of carriages. It is only when it becomes impossible to get together enough children to make even a small school by uniting the districts that a school municipality ceases to exist. And before it ceases to exist it must be a year without school; and, at the end of the year it must be shown that there is no attempt being made to revive the school. After all this the school passes out of existence. There is a certain degree of hardship on the part of those who, from that time, are