

I have read these extracts for the purpose of showing that when the ordinance of 1892 was passed the distinctive character of these schools as separate schools, as denominational schools, as schools controlled by a sectarian body for sectarian purposes, absolutely disappeared.

That is in 1892.

We have it that the clerical control of these schools was absolutely abolished.

That is what the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) says. This is the point which he has in view, that the clerical control of these schools had been abolished by the ordinance of 1892. He says :

It seems to me perfectly clear, that in abolishing the distinctive character of the schools, the legislature of the Northwest Territories did go beyond the powers that were bestowed upon it by this section of the Act of 1875.

In making a report on one of the ordinances passed shortly before 1892 but somewhat similar in its effect—not so sweeping in its effect—Sir John Thompson in substance reported that this ordinance, contracts or diminishes the rights of minorities to an extent not contemplated by the Act of 1875, and that the Act of 1875 must nevertheless be held to remain in force notwithstanding the passage of the ordinance.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. BERGERON. Mr. Speaker, when the House rose at six o'clock, I was reading the words of the member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton), his own apology for the extraordinary position which he assumes on the measure now before the House. He left the government because he could not agree with his colleagues on clause 16 of the Bill as originally presented, and when he spoke here he seemed to take a great deal of pride in the fact that the government had amended that clause and substituted for it the provision as to separate schools which we are now discussing. We have had it stated throughout the country, by the friends of the government in some quarters, that the government had not changed their policy on this question, and that the amended clause is in effect the same as clause 16, the difference being only in the phraseology. If we are to believe what the ex-minister (Mr. Sifton) says, and he seems to know all about it, it is quite clear that he carried his point against the government, against the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, and the framers of clause 16, and that these gentlemen had to take back water at the command of their ex-minister. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) said, 'Hansard' page 3103 :

Let me give what I conceive to be an accurate resumé of the principles which are enforced and carried out by these ordinances. We have one normal school with uniform normal

training for all teachers, and when I say all teachers, I mean teachers of all schools, separate and public ; uniform curricula and courses of study for all schools of the same grade ; uniform text books for all schools whatever ; uniform qualification of teachers for all schools whatever ; complete and absolute control of all schools as to their government and conduct, by the central school authority set up by the legislature under the ordinances ; complete secularization of all schools between nine o'clock in the morning and three-thirty in the afternoon, except that any school, if the trustees so desire, may be opened with the Lord's Prayer ; distribution of the legislative grant to all schools according to educational efficiency on principles set out in chapter 31.

Then, where there is a public school, the minority, Protestant or Roman Catholic, may organize a separate school ; but every separate school is subject absolutely to all the foregoing provisions, and is in every sense of the term a public school. If the Protestants are in the minority in a district, their school is called a separate school ;—

I call the attention of hon. gentlemen to the fact that what we in the province of Quebec would call a Protestant school, is, according to the member for Brandon, a separate school when the Protestants of the district are in the minority. The ex-minister continued :

If the Catholics are in the minority in a district, their school is called a separate school ; but both are public schools. They are absolutely similar save for one distinction : where the trustees are Protestant, there is Protestant teaching from half-past three to four, and where the trustees are Roman Catholic there is Roman Catholic teaching from half-past three to four. That is absolutely the only distinction between these schools.

Then the hon. gentleman read the amended clause as follows :

Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to separate schools which any class of persons have at the date of the passing of this Act, under the terms of chapters 29 and 30 of the ordinances of the Northwest Territories passed in the year 1901.

Commenting on this clause, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) is speaking to the element of our population who are opposed to separate schools ; he is making an apology for the amended clause, and he says :

What does that preserve ? I have read these ordinances through, and all that I can find this section to preserve—and it is an important thing—let us not exaggerate or minimize, let us know exactly what we are doing—I think that this is what we are doing and all that we are doing. This section preserves the right of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority to have their school, a separate school in name, but a public school in fact, in a separate building if they wish. That is the right it preserves. It preserves, secondly, the right of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority in such school to have religious teaching from 3.30 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon.