

consequence. What did he say? I am going to read it from the 'Hansard' lest I make any mistake:

I do not propose to go into that constitutional question, not because I say it should not receive any consideration, but because I say it is not the great question involved, and I prefer to go on and deal with the practical questions which are before us. If it is a constitutional question above all others, then perhaps the best thing we can do will be to request the legal members of this House to adjourn to the Railway Committee room and thresh it out, while we who have not the good fortune to belong to that learned profession will stay down here and discuss the practical question involved, or proceed with the ordinary business of the House.

And further on:

Now the first question is whether or not the time has come when we should give a provincial constitution to these new Territories in the west.

But before saying that, and having been interrupted by the leader of the opposition, to whom he was apparently speaking, he said:

I believe the people of the Dominion to-day are not going to have their minds engaged with an elaborate analysis of constitutional questions which nine out of ten will never read, and which the whole ten will fail to understand. I believe that the people of Canada, since this unpleasant question is brought before us, will expect us to meet it plainly and openly, and discuss it with the hope of finding a happy solution.

Now, on behalf of the Catholic citizens of the garden county of Lincoln, I tell the Minister of Finance, who is now in his place, that they will resent as much as the Protestants will resent any such imputation on their fairness. They do not want things to be done that are unconstitutional. No true citizen of this country, be he Catholic or Protestant, wants legislation to be put through this House on the ground that it may be wise and practical, if it is not constitutional. If it is not constitutional, it cannot be either wise or practical. In saying this, I speak for three or four thousand Roman Catholic inhabitants in the fair county of Lincoln, and I speak for the Protestants as well. The Minister of Finance thinks that this educational section of the Bill cannot be supported on constitutional ground. He thinks, according to his speech, that the law is also against the government if they undertake to force this legislation through, for he says: I will not discuss it, I will let the lawyers discuss it. But does he say he will leave it to the new provinces to do as they like? Oh, no; but he says: I will butt in and take the provinces by the throat, while the lawyers may study the legal question. I think he ought to wait until the jury comes in; I think he ought to keep his hands off these provinces until

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he finds out whether he had a right to put his hands on them. Now, let me suggest to the Minister of Finance, to the Minister of Customs, and to all those gentlemen who have spoken on this question: Supposing you do not interfere with the power of these provinces to deal with the educational question, are you doing a wrong thing or not? The lawyers say there is a doubt whether we have a right to interfere with the provinces, but nobody says there is a doubt about the provinces having a right to deal with this question of separate schools. Now, if separate schools can be dealt with, as it is admitted they can be, by the provinces, why not let them deal with it? Nobody suggests on either side of this House that these new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan cannot deal with the question of separate schools as soon as this Act is passed in any way that they like; the whole dispute is as to whether there is power in the Dominion parliament to deal with the subject. But there is no question about the fact that the provinces can do it if the Dominion parliament does not interfere. Now, have hon. gentlemen made a good case for separate schools or have they not? I am not going to discuss that question. I believe in provincial rights. If this question was up in the province of Ontario I would claim the right to record my vote upon it, and in the same manner I do not wish to take away the right of the people of the Northwest Territories to record their votes on the subject if they want to. I am willing to give my fellow-countrymen in the Northwest Territories the same right to do their own voting on this school question that I claim for myself. So in regard to every other question, they should be treated in the same way. Can it be suggested that if this was not an educational and, incidentally, a religious question, there would be any wrenching of the constitution to interfere with the provinces? Everybody knows the answer. Everybody knows that if this was not a question that affected education and, incidentally, religion, nobody would dare to suggest that we should wrench the constitution of those provinces, that we should undertake to throttle them in regard to their right to say what system of education they shall have. Of course, if we are going to give provincial autonomy to the Northwest Territories, let us give them something that will be autonomy, and not a mere pretense. Why are the government dealing with this question of provincial autonomy? Does the Prime Minister believe that these provinces have reached the stage where they are entitled to have autonomy? If he says they are entitled now to have autonomy on all the subjects mentioned in the British North America Act, then are they not entitled to exercise the same judgment with regard to education? If they have brains and intelligence enough, if they are far enough advanced to deal with all the other subjects