

to regulate educational affairs. Then I ask: Why all this contention; why are we here day after day discussing a question in which the Dominion parliament presumes to override the rights and liberties and freedom of these provinces and to take away from them the power they inherently possess to make their own educational laws? What kind of people do we find in the Northwest Territories? Do we find a people who are likely to submit to restriction of that kind? Sir, we find that many of them come from countries where they have been oppressed; from Russia and other countries where they did not enjoy many liberties. They come to this liberty loving land of Canada where they were led to believe every man would have the rights of British citizenship, and all men the world over know that British citizenship means freedom; that it means something to be prized and something worth living for. We find in the Northwest Territories people from the United States and people from the province of Ontario imbued with the same ideas of freedom; we find them coming from the British Isles to settle amongst us and are they to be told that they are not to be permitted to make laws in relation to education in accordance with the terms of the constitution that was granted to this country nearly 40 years ago? I cannot understand why the federal government should pin itself down to legislation of this kind and refuse to a liberty loving people, breathing the free atmosphere of the open prairie, that freedom to which they are entitled under our constitution. I cannot understand why this Dominion parliament should impose this restriction upon this people, contrary to their wish and contrary to the law of the land. Not only, Sir, is it contrary to their wish, but it is contrary to the pledge that was solemnly made by the First Minister prior to the last general election, when he informed Mr. Haultain that if he were returned to power he would consider the granting to these Territories provincial autonomy, and not a limited self-government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not desire to detain the House further. I feel grateful to hon. gentlemen that on the eve of the holidays they should remain here to listen to my remarks. In closing, I desire to say this: I stand by the principle of provincial rights; I stand for the right of these people which properly belongs to them, to administer their own affairs in every matter that is relegated to them under the British North America Act, and amongst which is the right to exclusively legislate on matters of education. We never can give these people full provincial rights until we amend the educational clause of that Bill, and withdraw the restrictions that are sought to be imposed upon them. They are entitled to the fullest self-government, and that and that alone will satisfy them. As a member of this Dominion parliament, I feel that I

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have no right to withhold any power from the people of that country which properly belongs to them. As a member of this House representing a constituency in the province of Ontario, I have no right to withhold one jot or one tittle of the powers which the people of the west are entitled to under our constitution. I have no hesitation in saying how I shall vote. I will not have that difficulty which the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) tells us he has; I will not have the difficulty that supporters of the government have. The ex-Minister of the Interior has told us:

That question which comes to every man in public life sooner or later comes to-day to a good many men in this House of Commons.

I sympathize with any man who is compelled to act contrary to his own conscientious convictions, even if he should do so for the purpose of saving the government which he supports. But, Sir, I have never regarded that as sufficient reason for a man to vote against his conscience. I would rather go back to my constituents and surrender the trust they reposed in me, and tell them that if they desired a measure which I did not believe in, to become law, they should elect a man who would represent the views of the government. I shall have great pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by our honoured leader (Mr. R. L. Borden). We, on this side of the House are sometimes taunted across the floor, because we are not united on this question; but, Sir, I am glad that members on this side of the House realize, that with the utmost freedom they can vote according to their own conscientious beliefs. I would be the last man to ask any of my fellow members to vote against what he believed to be conscientiously right, even though his vote was directly in opposition to mine. I hold that this is the privilege of every member of this House. It is man's inherent right, his privilege at all times to be governed by his own convictions, and I say that if it ever came to this that I had to surrender principle for the sake of supporting and keeping my party in power, I would prefer to leave my party, to go out of power and to stand upon principle.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. HENDERSON. Some hon. gentlemen say 'oh.' I have done it before, and I can, when necessary, do it again. On this occasion I am glad that I am not called upon to do anything of that kind. I am glad that my constituents are fully in harmony with the sentiments I have expressed here to-day, and I am in full harmony with the views of my constituents. I would not be executing the trust imposed on me were I, for one moment to hesitate and support the measure which is before the House. I realize that fact, and therefore it shall be my pleasant duty—I say it again, my pleasant duty—not with reluctance, not with