

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTHWEST.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the second reading of Bill (No. 69) to establish and provide for the government of the province of Alberta, and the amendment of Mr. R. L. Borden thereto.

Hon. L. P. BRODEUR (Minister of Inland Revenue). Mr. Speaker, I desire to express my deep gratitude to the House that I have the opportunity of taking part in such an important discussion as the one now going on. We must all feel gratified that this debate has been carried on in such a manner that the citizens of Canada must feel proud of this parliament. In fact, we have not heard throughout the whole debate any expression which could hurt the feelings of any member of this House. The debate has been carried on in a dignified way, and I will try, in the few remarks which I intend to offer, to follow the example set by those who have preceded me. The first question which we have to consider is whether we should create new provinces in the Northwest, and, if so, what constitution we should give to those provinces. The unanimous feeling in this House is in favour of granting provincial autonomy to the Northwest. It has been suggested that we should have only one province instead of two; but generally the opinion of the members is strongly in favour of the creation of two provinces. Now, what constitution should we give to those provinces? On that question there has been some difference of opinion, especially with regard to the school question, and I will try to give the reasons why I think the educational clauses of the Bill, as amended should be supported by the members of this House. The hon. leader of the opposition the other day, at page 3096 of 'Hansard,' spoke as follows:

If my hon. friend is able to show me that there is, in respect of those proposed provisions, any such compact as that which was made before confederation between the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, I will then readily accept his illustration.

The illustration referred to was to the effect that since Ontario and Quebec have their separate schools, the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan should not be denied that privilege. We see, therefore, that my hon. friend the leader of the opposition has declared that if we can establish a compact or agreement with regard to separate schools in the Northwest such as there was with regard to schools in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, he is ready to concede that separate schools should be established in the new provinces we are now creating. Well, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, there was a formal agreement and compact by virtue of which separate schools were to be established in the North-

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west Territories. I shall prove this by referring to what occurred in 1869 and 1870, and that consequently the parliament of Canada is to-day bound to give separate schools to the new provinces. I need not refer to the treaties which were passed between England and France in 1763, because those treaties cannot be called upon to establish any rights or privileges with regard to the Northwest Territories. We know very well that Rupert's Land or the Northwest Territories were under the sovereignty of England for more than two centuries. We know very well that they were under the laws and constitution of England from 1670 to 1870, when they were brought under the control of the Canadian government. We well recollect that in 1869 or 1870 there was a disturbance in the Northwest. The Canadian government, without having the necessary authority, sent up some persons to that country to take possession of it. At that time there was no law which had been passed by the British parliament, there was no proclamation issued by the British parliament, handing this territory over to the Canadian government. However, the Canadian government took upon itself to send people up there to exercise the sovereign power. An agitation and disturbance ensued, and a very serious agitation it was indeed. The imperial government then tried by all means to adjust the differences of opinion which existed at that time between the settlers of the west and the Canadian government. Lord Granville, then Colonial Secretary, sent a despatch to Sir John Young, then Governor General of Canada, in 1869, and Sir John Young wrote to Governor McTavish, of the Territories, a letter in which he transmitted the despatch from Lord Granville. Speaking of that despatch from Lord Granville, Sir John Young used the following language,

The message conveys the matured opinion of the imperial cabinet. The proclamation I have issued is based upon it, and you will observe that it requests all who have desires to express or complaints to make, be referred to me as invested with authority on behalf of the British government, to the inhabitants of Rupert's Land; and all classes of persuasion may rest assured that Her Majesty has no intention of interfering with, or setting aside, or allowing others to interfere with the religion and rights and the franchise hitherto enjoyed.

Thus we find, in the words of that letter from Sir John Young, the representative of the imperial government in Canada, that all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the settlers of the Northwest Territories were to be continued. Sir John Young at the same time issued a proclamation to the settlers, in which he said:

I do, therefore, assure you that in the union with Canada all your civil rights and religious rights and privileges will be respected.