

dum sent to the home government by Sir John A. Macdonald in order that we may see the scope of the imperial statute. Writing to the Earl of Kimberly, he asked the imperial parliament to enact legislation in its next session :

1. Confirming the Act of the Canadian parliament, 33 Victoria, chapter 3, above referred to, as if it had been an imperial statute, and legalizing whatever may have been done under it according to its true interests.

2. Empowering the Dominion parliament from time to time to establish other provinces in the Northwestern Territory, with such local government, legislature and constitution as it may think proper, provided that no such local government or legislature shall have greater powers than those conferred on the local governments and legislatures by the British North America Act, 1867, and also empowering it to grant such provinces representation in the parliament of the Dominion.

These were the purposes, as stated by Sir John Macdonald, for which the imperial parliament passed the Act of 1871.

With regard to this Bill, the British North America Act of 1867 cannot alone apply. The British North America Act of 1871 must also apply. The two must be construed together.

Let me go one step further. Are the educational clauses of this Bill inconsistent with the spirit of our constitution? Read the preamble of the British North America Act and what do you find?

Whereas the provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have expressed their desire to be federally united into one Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom.

I ask you, Sir, is there anything in the educational clause contrary in principle to the constitution of the United Kingdom?

Sir, if there is a redeeming feature in the present debate for the partisans of the separate schools system, it is the fact that in Great Britain, in the mother country, there is also a system whereby denominational schools are state aided. Yes, Mr. Speaker, in England, the country wherefrom we borrowed our parliamentary institutions; in England, wherefrom we borrowed a constitution; in England, minorities enjoy their full liberty in matters of education. I, a Canadian and a Roman Catholic, am proud to cite this example of tolerance given by our mother country. I ask my friend from Grey would he be in Canada less generous, less tolerant than the average English Protestant in England?

Sir, I need not refer at any length to the history of the school question in England. But I may say at the outset that the right hon. leader of the House is not the only statesman who has had to face grave difficulties with regard to an Educational Bill. Sir, the greatest of all modern British statesmen has also had his hours of anxiety

when in 1870 he attempted to legislate upon a similar question. Mr. Gladstone lost many a warm friend, many a firm supporter, when he introduced the Educational Bill of 1870.

For years, I might say for centuries, there had been in England a system of national schools. But there were many sects, many creeds in England, and it was felt that it would be a violation of the principle of religious liberty if the dissenters were forced to send their children to schools, the religious teaching of which was not in conformity with their views. So, by the side of national schools, grew up a system of voluntary schools—that is to say, separate schools—where the dissenters of all sects and denominations sent their children. The secular teaching did not differ much from that of the national schools; but the religious teaching given the children was in accordance with the tenets of the parents' faith. Catholics, Wesleyans, Quakers established all over the realm voluntary schools. So much so, that a time came when more children frequented the voluntary schools than the national schools. The board schools were state aided; the voluntary schools were self-sustaining. There were in England, as there are in this country, partisans of the neutral school. There were also men who thought that the children had a right to a religious teaching according to the religious belief of their parents.

Such was the opinion of Mr. Gladstone. Such was also the opinion of Lord Salisbury. Let me quote, Mr. Speaker, the opinion of those two great British statesmen. As far back as 1856 Mr. Gladstone said:

We have happily found it practicable in England to associate together in the most perfect harmony these two principles, the principle of voluntary exertion, through which you get heart and love and moral influence infused into your school instruction, and the principle of material aid from the state, by which the skeleton and framework of your education is provided. I am convinced that the harmony which has hitherto been maintained between them, even in times of doubt and difficulty, will continue, and, if possible, increase, but if I were driven utterly to abandon the voluntary, or to place exclusive reliance upon it, I would not hesitate a moment in making my choice. In such an emergency, I would say at once, give me the real education, the affection of the heart, the moral influence operating upon character, the human love, that are obtained through the medium of the voluntary principle carried by men whose main motive is one of Christian philanthropy rather than throw me upon a system which, whatever the intentions of its mover may be, must sooner or later degenerate into hard irreligion.

Lord Salisbury, on another occasion, spoke as follows:

There is only one sound principle in religious education to which you should cling, which you should relentlessly enforce against all the conveniences and experiences of official