

of antagonism to the idea of union has grown up. It is impossible that people who have any self-respect should submit to these threats or should give way to pressure of this kind. That feeling has been growing, and there is, further, a strong and rooted objection to throwing in their fortune with a province which has so many heavy and serious liabilities at this time. A union with Manitoba would be entirely out of the question. This feeling is universal, and a determination exists, and has existed for some time, to oppose by every possible means the adding to Manitoba of one foot of territory to the west. I venture to say that if a vote were taken on this question 95 per cent of the people would vote in this way.

The school clauses of the Bill have been the subject of much criticism and much discussion, and their consideration has taken up most of the time of the House. I am not a lawyer and I cannot discuss the matter from a constitutional point of view, but I have heard the opinions of constitutional lawyers on both sides of the House, and I must say that the different conclusions at which they have arrived have confused rather than enlightened those who listened to them. I will speak on the school question from a point of view different from that taken by any other gentleman who has spoken on the subject. I have been living in the Northwest for many years. I have reared a family there, and I am going to speak on the subject from the point of view of the father of a family whose children have attended those schools which are under discussion. I have availed myself of the opportunity to somewhat carefully study our school system since I went into that country, because I have always considered the education of a family to be a very serious matter. I can say this, Mr. Speaker, and I can say it frankly and plainly, that in the Northwest Territories we have as good a school system as exists anywhere in Canada. The people who use these schools are satisfied with them. We can turn to our friends from Quebec and we can say to them: Your compatriots and your co-religionists in the Northwest Territories are satisfied with those schools; and we can say to our friends from Ontario or any of the other Protestant provinces: We, the Protestants of the Northwest are satisfied with our school system which has worked well and is satisfactory to every one concerned. Let me say, Sir, that from the constituency which I have the honour to represent I have had not a single petition asking me to do anything else than to support the system of schools which is at present established in that country. I would like to say one thing further, Mr. Speaker, and that is, that after listening to the speeches made from the opposition side of the House, I do not think that any one of them described the actual state of affairs.

I do not think you will find in one of these speeches that the real state of affairs in regard to education now existing in the Northwest is plainly set forth before the people. You hear from these gentlemen opposite a great deal about shackling the new provinces and tying up the people of the Northwest, but all that kind of talk is an entire mystery to the people of the west themselves. I have just arrived from the west to-day, and I can say that in the hotels, travelling on trains, passing through the country and meeting people of all kinds, I failed to find a single man who really understood the exact state of affairs and who was not satisfied to see the school clauses of this Bill become law. The fact of the matter is that to find any agitation on the subject you have to get away from the Northwest Territories. The hon. gentleman who addressed the House this afternoon was able to give us some very valuable information on the subject, and I intended to deal at length with it but it has been gone over so often that it is hardly worth while to do so at this stage of the debate.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Go on.

Mr. ADAMSON. There are at least eleven hundred schools now in operation in the Northwest Territories. Any of the school districts have the power, if they choose to exercise it, to call into operation the separate school clauses of the Act, but we find that less than one per cent of them have done so, and that one per cent is hardly noticed although both Protestant and Catholic children do attend these separate schools. I lived within twelve miles of one of these separate schools for a long time without knowing that there was a separate school there. I think every member of this House who seriously considers the question will acknowledge that this is just as close as we possibly can get to having a national school system. We had a very pleasant picture drawn by the member for Middlesex (Mr. Elson) of a condition of affairs which he considered to be ideal, in which children grew up together knowing one another well, and becoming closer in friendship and more united in ideas. We all agree with that. The ideal state of affairs possibly would be that, and I contend that in the Northwest Territories we have attained as near as is humanly possible to that ideal. Now, I do not say that religious instruction in the schools is good, nor do I say it is bad; but, acting on the assumption that national schools are actual perfection, and seeing that the extreme limit of religious instruction which can be given in these schools amounts to one-half hour each day, then in the Northwest Territories we have it, that as one-twelfth of the time only can be devoted to religious instruction, and that only one per cent of the schools exercise that right, we, therefore, come within one-twelfth of a