

the other day by the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa). He tried to show what a kind and statesmanlike thing it would be to relieve the people of the Northwest of the burden of managing these lands. That seemed to be the general trend of his remarks. He suggested that the members of the provincial legislatures might be pressed to use the lands improperly. If he finds that difficulty in the province of Quebec he has the remedy of inducing his province to hand over all their lands to the administration of the Dominion. But, we have never found any difficulty of that kind whatever in the Northwest Territories in the matters with which we have had to deal up to the present day, and I believe we shall find no difficulty in that connection in the future. At any rate, who is the more likely to have improper pressure put upon them to administer these lands wrongly? Is it the members of the legislatures of the new provinces who are directly under the eye of the people most intimately concerned, or is it not likely to be the Minister of the Interior who is acting by himself down here at Ottawa?

After all, these questions, important as they are to the people of the Northwest Territories, are overshadowed by the educational clauses in this Bill. These clauses have been introduced, I assert once again in spite of what the hon. member for Ottawa said, in such a form as to invite opposition; and the disparaging references made constantly to the people of the Northwest by member after member on the other side of the House have not been such as to soothe the feelings of the people under these difficult circumstances. I would like to say, in reference to the statement made by the hon. member for Ottawa that he had been told that no school question existed in the Northwest Territories up to the present time, that that is practically the case. The school question has been raised in this parliament and raised on the other side of the House. But, I consider that the same hon. gentleman misrepresents the position of this party when he suggests that our attitude is to favour the repeal of the present system of education which obtains in the Northwest Territories. The position of this party is that this is a local and provincial question which should be dealt with entirely by the provinces, that this is a matter in reference to which this parliament has no right or power to place restrictions or limitations on the provinces. We contend for provincial rights in this matter. The hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) accuses us of misusing what he refers to as that sacred term. With one breath he denounces us for appealing for provincial rights and then with the next breath he approves of the federal authorities retaining possession of the public lands of the Northwest Territories which we

Mr. LAKE.

believe it will be an infringement of provincial rights for the Dominion to retain in their possession. He went on to treat the people of the Northwest Territories as if they were children and as if they had no rights. I do not propose to follow him into the religious discussion which he raised. This evening we again had a violent racial and religious appeal from the hon. member for Ottawa. As I said before I have made up my mind that I at any rate will not follow the bad example which has been set us by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. I respect the religious convictions of others and I think they should show the same respect for my religious convictions. I feel they have not done it. Nor, Sir, is it a question of the value of separate schools as an abstract proposition. We are not discussing that question at all. It is a question of equal rights to the new provinces with those which have been given to other provinces in the Dominion to deal with matters of education. It has been suggested that this question has been raised on this side of the House as a party question, that this side of the House is responsible for the agitation that is going on in the Northwest Territories at the present moment. Now, Sir, it just happened that yesterday afternoon, after the close of the sitting of this House, I received a letter from the largest town in my constituency which I propose, with your permission, to read:

Indian Head, Assa., March 22, 1905.

R. S. Lake, Esq.,

Parliament Buildings, Ottawa.

Dear Sir,—At the annual meeting of Indian Head Liberal Association held here to-day, I was instructed to send you a copy of the following resolution which was duly carried, viz.:

We, the members of Indian Head Liberal Association, desire to enter a protest against the educational clauses in the Autonomy Bill, believing that such is an interference with provincial rights. The clause as amended in the compromise Bill now before parliament, does not, in our opinion, contain any modification of what we believe to be an infringement of our rights as a province, and for this reason we as emphatically protest against the Bill as remodelled.

Yours respectfully,

(Sgd.) J. M. THOMPSON,

Secretary Indian Head Liberal Association.

I would like to ask the hon. member for Ottawa, if he were present, if he considers that my hon. friend from East Grey (Mr. Sproule) had anything to do with that resolution. I presume that these are the gentlemen to whom he referred as renegades, or are these the gentlemen of whom the hon. Minister of Justice spoke when he said that the right hon. Prime Minister had not lost the respect of any persons for whose respect he cared?

I differ entirely from the cheerful declarations of the hon. Minister of Finance when he stated his 'firm conviction that most