

This, taken in connection with the introductory portion of this clause, I think, determines the whole question. It appears to me that if we could determine without any question or doubt when these Territories enter the union, we could then determine what legislation, if any, it was necessary or reasonable to make, in regard to educational matters for the new province. In my mind, I am satisfied that the date of the union is necessarily the date upon which the Territories take upon themselves the duties and privileges of a province. The Dominion may have been possessed of this Territory, but I look upon the date of the union as being that time when the people of the Territories and the people of the Dominion agree upon conditions under which the one is willing to confer and the other to receive the constitution of the Dominion. This, as you will perceive, is not a matter pertaining to territory, but it refers to the people, and is therefore a union not of land but of the people of the Territories with those of the Dominion. What I understand to be the supreme moment, that the territory becomes a province and the union is consummated is when the Dominion gives and the territory receives the constitution, and thus becomes an integral part of the confederation, from henceforth living under and being bound by the constitution of the Dominion.

I do not propose to quote any authorities, but this is the opinion held by some of the most eminent American constitutional lawyers, such as Cooley, Tucker, Story, and others. Then, if this is the case, and the new provinces are given merely the British North America Act of 1867, as proposed by hon. gentlemen opposite, they necessarily would be thrown back on the law of 1875, which gave to the Territories separate schools with dual representation and all those clerical influences which the members of the opposition are so afraid will contaminate the youth of the land. There is no question but that the legislature of the Territories have pared down and eliminated many of the objectionable features of the 1875 Act, so that to-day we have in the Northwest a system of schools which is entirely satisfactory to all parties, or as nearly so as you could expect to have in any country where there lived people of diverse opinions and who have all to come under one system. It would be utterly impossible to have in any country where we have gathered together people from all nations of the earth, of different languages, different aspirations, and different creeds, any system of education that would be entirely satisfactory to all of them, but I think the legislators of the Territories have legislated well and have given us a system as near perfection as possible. I will now read to you a letter which I have received from the school inspector of the district in which

I live. I do not know this gentleman's political leanings, nor do I think any person else does, excepting himself. Nor do I know whether he voted for the government or against it at the last election. However, I consider his opinion on this account the more valuable, and based upon facts and not upon prejudice:

Yorkton, Assiniboia, February 13th, 1905.

Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter and am happy to give you any information in my power relative to the working of the general school law in the Northwest Territories. I regret that the time is so short as I should like to have gone into the question more at length than is now possible.

On a general view of the situation I have come to the conclusion that the measure of liberty given in the Northwest Territories Act to the Catholic minority is at once sufficient and fair. We have no school question here, as the separate school question is understood in the east. Separate schools have come to mean a separate taxation, separate teachers, separate curricula, separate inspectors—such we have not in the Northwest Territories, and there is no provision for them. Under the clause relating to education in the Northwest Territories Act it has become practically possible to establish a purely public school system, and at the same time allow any minority to establish its own school if it likes to pay for the sentiment. To illustrate: Imagine the ordinary school district of five miles square. If it happens to be a settlement of German Catholics they may organize a Catholic public school district, they must teach according to the programme of studies for all schools, must employ a proper and qualified teacher and must adhere to the regulations allowing a half-hour of religious instruction just before the close of school, the pupils of parents not wishing the instruction to be received leaving. Now, in that same area if there is a Protestant minority they are at liberty to establish a Protestant separate school taxing only the Protestant ratepayers, the Catholic public school trustees getting their support thereafter from the Catholic ratepayers.

Next: Imagine an ordinary settlement—the majority form an ordinary school district. If there happen to be, say, a minority of French half-breed Catholics within this area they may establish a Catholic separate school, taxing only the Catholics for its support, the Protestants or some of the Catholics (if they so elect, as sometimes happens) being taxed for the original school. Thus the general result is that a separate school district is formed within an ordinary school district—the taxable power of that area is weakened—there being two schools to support, this of course touches the pocket and acts as a most powerful check on the separate school whether Protestant or Catholic. I have in my inspectorate an originally Catholic public school district in which a Protestant separate school is being operated. Both are in charge of our normal students, both working successfully within a mile of each other, but they have to pay for it. I have no instance of a Catholic separate school formed within a Protestant district. Our Catholic school is a public school to all intents and purposes, the weakening of the taxable power of the area combined with the entire absence of additional sectarian privileges is the steady and efficient check on the frequent establishment of separate schools.