

of the House this afternoon by my hon. friend from Hants (Mr. Black). However, as he did not read the whole clause I would like to place it on record. I quote from the school regulations made by the Council of Public Instruction and now in force in Nova Scotia. This is the regulation:

Whereas, it has been represented to the council that trustees of public schools have, in certain cases, required pupils, on pain of forfeiting school privileges, to be present during devotional exercises not approved of by their parents; and whereas, such proceeding is contrary to the principles of the school law, the following regulation is made for the direction of trustees, the better to ensure the carrying out of the spirit of the law in this behalf:

It is ordered that in cases where the parents or guardians of children in actual attendance on any public school or department signify in writing to the trustees their conscientious objection to any portion of such devotional exercises as may be conducted therein under the sanction of the trustees, such devotional exercises shall either be so modified as not to offend the religious feelings of those so objecting, or shall be held immediately before the time fixed for the opening, or after the time fixed for the close of the daily work of the school; and no children whose parents or guardians signify conscientious objections thereto, shall be required to be present during such devotional exercises.

It seems to be taken for granted by the council of public instruction of Nova Scotia that there will be devotional exercises in the schools, and this is a provision to regulate these exercises. Now, this system has worked well in Nova Scotia for a good many years. There is no person there who has turned pale or become hysterical over it. Everything has gone well; and I have no doubt that when we adopt this system in the west, it will work well there.

I do not wish to weary the House with a speech of any length. Like my hon. friend from Hants (Mr. Black) I simply intended, when I rose to give a few reasons why I intend to support the measure now before the House. While other clauses of the Bill are of equal importance, I have not attempted to deal with anything except the educational clauses. The reasons why I intend to support this Bill and to vote against the amendment of the leader of the opposition, I desire to state briefly as follows:

First. Because it is an honourable and fair compromise of a very difficult and delicate question, and, while it satisfies to some extent the religious convictions of forty-one per cent of the people of Canada, it contains nothing that should be in any sense offensive to the religious views of the remaining forty-nine per cent.

Second. Because the school system that we are now perpetuating is a school system that was adopted about thirteen years ago by the people of the Territories themselves; that system has worked satisfactorily ever

since; and it may be fairly said to be an expression of the will of the people of the Territories.

Third. I am opposed to the amendment of the leader of the opposition because the effect of it is to leave the whole matter in a state of uncertainty, to give rise to disputes and litigation, and to destroy the peace and retard the progress of the new provinces.

Fourth. I am opposed to the amendment of the leader of the opposition because it is a sheer evasion of the question at issue. If the words 'at the union' are to be held to mean 1905, then, by passing this amendment we should be fastening on the new provinces the system of clerical schools that the people abolished in 1892, a system to which I am determinedly opposed.

Fifth. I am in favour of the educational clauses of this Bill because they give an opportunity to both Protestants and Catholics who hold religious convictions on this question to give religious instruction to their children for half an hour at the close of each school day without interfering with the national character of the school.

Sixth. I support the Bill because it definitely settles this question once for all, and prevents the introduction into these western provinces of those painful racial and religious quarrels that have disturbed the peace of the older provinces of Canada.

Seventh. I support the Bill because the schools to be established under this regulation must of necessity be free public schools, using only the authorized text-books, taught by regularly licensed teachers, inspected by the public school inspector, and in every respect under complete public control.

Eighth. I support the Bill because it preserves existing rights and prevents any feeling of injustice on the part of those who enjoyed this system for the past thirty years.

Ninth. I support the Bill because the policy of the Liberal party to-day is consistent with the policy of the party in 1896. In 1896 the Liberal party stood for schools established by the people of Manitoba, and to-day they stand for schools established by the people of the Northwest.

Tenth. Because we ought to have the courage of our convictions on a question of this kind, and not, like the hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), take refuge behind legal technicalities. What do you think of the spectacle of the leader of a great party declaring that he has nothing to say in favour of separate schools, that he has nothing to say against separate schools, who confesses that he has absolutely no more opinion than a baby on a great question of this kind, and who contents himself with moving a resolution that bewilders everybody, and that he has not yet ventured to explain.

Eleventh. I am in favour of this measure because it secures to every child in Alberta