

for the Parliament of Canada to alter the provisions of the Manitoba Act in so far as it relates to the province of Manitoba. Obviously therefore, the separate school system in Manitoba is beyond the reach of the legislature or of the Dominion Parliament.

It turned out subsequently that Sir John Macdonald was wrong. Our highest court decided that the Manitoba School Act of 1890 was *intra vires*. Consequently, even the late Sir John Macdonald was wrong in his interpretation of the law in regard to schools in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Would the hon. gentleman be good enough to tell us when that letter first appeared and to whom it is addressed?

Mr. PRINGLE. I tell you that I took it out of the work which I have mentioned at page 32 and which is to be found in the library. I have never seen it denied. But, I will say to that hon. gentleman this; let us go back to the time when confederation took place, to the policy of the late Sir John Macdonald and the policy of the men who took part in confederation, and if we do we will see that it was their policy to do justice to minorities. Let me quote some language that was uttered by Sir John Macdonald at that time. This is what he said:

We all feel the advantage we derive from our connection with England. So long as that alliance is maintained we enjoy under her protection the privileges of constitutional liberty according to the British system. We will enjoy here that which is the great test of constitutional freedom—we will have the rights of the minority respected. In all countries the rights of the majority take care of themselves, but it is only in countries like England, enjoying constitutional liberty and safe from the tyranny of a single despot, or of an unlimited democracy that the rights of minorities are regarded.

These are the utterances of Sir John Macdonald at the time that the foundation was laid of this great confederation and we have not only the utterances of Sir John Macdonald, but the utterances of all the great men who took part in laying the foundation of our confederation. We have the same utterances from the Hon. Edward Blake, and we have the same utterances from other eminent Canadian statesmen. I am fully sensible that my remarks will not meet with the approval of all the members of this House. I cannot help that. As I stated in the beginning of my remarks, I am not here representing Protestant or Roman Catholic. I am here trying to do what I think is honestly right in the interest of the country. I respect the convictions of every hon. member who may differ from me upon this matter, and I ask hon. members to respect my convictions in regard to this question. Now, what occurred in subsequent years? We come down to 1875, when it was found

necessary and desirable, owing to the population going into that northwestern country to provide for its government. A Bill was framed for the administration of affairs in the Northwest Territories. We have heard this over and over again, but just let me hurriedly pass over it. That Bill was introduced by the late Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, a man who, in his early years, was opposed to separate schools, who fought separate schools together with George Brown in the early days in the province of Ontario, but, when it was suggested by Edward Blake that there should be a clause in that Act in regard to separate schools and in regard to the protection of the minority in the Northwest Territories, it was put in. Sir John Macdonald was in the House at that time. Sir John Macdonald, knowing what had gone before in regard to the early history of the Northwest Territories, knowing the promises that had been made, knowing, no doubt, the discussion that had taken place in regard to the different Bills of Rights, did what? Did he get up in 1875 and oppose the granting of these rights to the minorities in that country? No, Sir. He knew what had taken place earlier and he conceded to the minority their rights. When that matter went to the Senate, what occurred there? An amendment was moved. George Brown spoke on that amendment and spoke in favour of it, but Sir Alexander Campbell who was then leading the Conservative party in the Senate considered that it was fair and right and equitable and the Northwest Territories Act of 1875 was passed just as it stands on the statute-book to-day. Now then, we heard nothing further in regard to this very controversial question, because nobody conceives more than I do that this question is causing a great deal of controversy in the Dominion of Canada. In my own constituency a large majority of the people are Protestants. I go among the Protestant Liberals and I find the Liberals dissenting to the Bill which is now before the House. I do not find so much objection on the part of the Protestant Conservatives as I do on the part of the Protestant Liberals because the Protestant Liberals have been educated in this matter for some years. The Protestant Liberals, in 1896, were educated to oppose the rights of the minority in that country. That is the reason that when I go through my constituency I hear a great deal more objection on the part of Protestant Liberals than I do on the part of Protestant Conservatives. But, now, I say we did not hear very much of this matter until this unfortunate agitation occurred in the province of Manitoba. And I say to hon. gentlemen opposite that if there is trouble to-day in the Dominion of Canada it is not owing to anything the Conservative party have done in the past, but it is