

being given to the Territories, but I feel bound to say that ninety per cent of the people did not know it. We have no reason to suppose that they had been consulted. Even if they had been consulted, the simple fact that a dual system of schools was established in that country in 1875 is not to be taken as a reason why at this distant date we should perpetuate it. If any evidence is wanted to show that the Act of 1875 was not considered to be a permanent measure, we have only to look at the measure before us, where we find a clause repealing the old Territorial Act, showing conclusively that it was designed merely to regulate the affairs of that country until such time as new provinces should be created. That being the case, I hold that we are now untrammelled and perfectly free to give to those provinces such a constitution as we think is best for them. We are not obliged to go back ten, or twenty, or thirty years, in order to ascertain what privileges or powers they possessed at that time. Everything of that kind is to be wiped out; old things are passed away, and all things are to become new; a new era is to be ushered in, and we are absolutely free to determine what kind of constitution, in the light of conditions now existing, should guide the destinies of that country for all time to come. I think this proposition has been made clear by very high legal authority. I do not like to repeat over and over again the opinions of public men, but I think we make no mistake if we repeat daily the opinions of some of our public men on some of these constitutional questions, because we want to get them, not only into the minds of the people, but into the minds of hon. members of this House, some of whom do not yet apprehend them. Whether they have not listened to them or studied them, I do not know; but certainly, from their utterances and from the applause which those utterances received from others, I apprehend that they have not yet realized the full import of the opinions of our great public men of the past regarding this question. Notwithstanding my hesitation to repeat what has been said before, I will refer to only two or three of these opinions. One of them is that of a gentleman whose opinion was always regarded as a high authority in this House. I had the honour of sitting in this House for some eight or nine years with Sir John Thompson, and I say now what I said during his lifetime, that in my opinion he was the brainiest man in Canada in his time and the highest constitutional authority. In my opinion, any statement made by Sir John Thompson on a question of this kind was worthy of the best consideration; and what did he say in 1894? Referring to the very question to which I have made reference, he said:

What the constitution of the future provinces shall be, in view of the pledges which have been referred to, or in view of any other set of cir-

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cumstances, will be for the parliament to decide when it decides to create those provinces.

That is just along the line of what I have been saying. We are free to give to those people to-day the very best constitution we can devise, in the light of all the new conditions with which we are surrounded, and we are better prepared to-day to give a constitution to that country than those of 1875, who practically knew nothing of the value or character or conditions of the country. I will give you one further quotation, which is from a gentleman who sat in this House for eight or nine years whilst I had the honour of being a member of it. Though he was politically opposed to me, I listened to his utterances on many occasions and always with a great deal of pleasure; I refer to the Hon. David Mills. I remember that hon. gentleman coming across and perhaps gathering around him a group of new members, and sitting down and discussing with us constitutional questions that were before the country at that time. I received information privately from the Hon. David Mills in that way which I do not think I shall ever forget. I learned to respect that gentleman for his erudition. I believe that he was too cautious a man to give an opinion on any constitutional question until he had thoroughly sifted it, and when he did give an opinion he was able to rely upon it. That was the opinion I formed of the Hon. David Mills, and it is the one I entertain to-day. In 1894, when a question relating to the Northwest Territories was up in this House, he said:

When the people of the Northwest Territories or any portion of them are sufficiently numerous to constitute a province, when in fact, they attain their majority in regard to local matters, and when they propose to set up for themselves, this parliament has no right to exercise control over them, no right to exercise any authority; it can give good advice, but it has no right to give commands. But we are not dealing with the future. When the Territories have a sufficient population to entitle them to become a province they must decide for themselves whether they will have separate schools or not.

That is the opinion of the Hon. David Mills, given in 1894, and that is the opinion which I hold in 1905, and I believe it to be the one held by the great bulk of hon. members on this side. Complete autonomy, complete self-government, provincial rights, the right to decide for themselves, not only in other matters but especially in the matter of education, the right to decide what kind of school system they should have, whether a national or a dual system—those are rights which belong to the provinces. I shall not trouble the House by quoting what was said by Mr. Justice Girouard along the same lines, but would ask permission to quote once more a few words from the Right Hon. Sir John Thompson. In answer to an hon. member of this House, he said: