

both inside and outside this House, expressing diametrically opposite views. But it is just this conflict of opinion amongst the lawyers which makes the situation so uncertain and which might cause the adoption of the amendment of the leader of the opposition to be the very worst blow that could be struck at the national school idea in the new provinces. If I understand Mr. Haultain and those who hold his views, the word 'union' in clause 93 and the other clauses of the British North America Act of 1867 applies to the Territories when taken over by the Canadian government in 1870. If that opinion be good law, then the national school idea or any other idea which the legislatures of the new provinces might feel it their duty to enact would have full sway, because in 1870 there were no separate schools in the Territories to claim the protection of the British North America Act. But on the other hand, if the opinion expressed by other eminent lawyers, including my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk), be good law and the word 'union' applies to the provinces the day they are constituted as such, and if nevertheless the legislatures of the new provinces should refuse to establish separate schools, it is fair to assume that the courts, when appealed to by the minority, would compel them to do so. More than that the courts would be asked to decide the kind of separate schools the minority are entitled to—whether the kind provided by the ordinance of the Northwest Territories in 1892; or the kind anticipated by the Northwest Territories Act of 1875, which were in vogue between 1884 and 1892. If the courts should decide in favour of the latter, the people of the Territories would for ever be tied to a system of separate schools of the extreme type, purely denominational, with every vestige of the national idea lost for ever. Are advocates of the national schools prepared to take that risk, for that is the risk they take by supporting the amendment of the leader of the opposition.

What is the difference between these two kinds of schools—the school they had in the Territories between 1884 and 1892 and the schools are there at present? All the members of this House have had before them the text of the Northwest Territories ordinance of 1892, so that it is not necessary to explain in detail the school system now existing in the Territories. I may briefly say that the schools now in vogue are national in the full meaning of the word. A responsible minister is at their head, they are administered by a national council, they are inspected by a national inspector, they are taught by teachers qualified under national and common conditions, and use text books in common authorized by the national council. What else? If a minority either Protestant or Catholic, are sufficiently strong to support a school out of their own taxes they may do so. For what purpose? In order that

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they may for half an hour each day teach religious subjects according to the faith that is within them. The schools then that are in the Territories to-day are national to the fullest extent of the meaning of that word. Is that a bad system? Are we to be told by a Christian nation that that system is good except in this respect, that a half hour is given in the separate schools for religious exercise after the school hours are closed? I refuse to believe that this country will pronounce that system a good one save for this single exception. Are we to be told by a Christian nation that a system is good except that clause which provides for a half hour religious teaching each day? I refuse to believe that neighbour will rise against neighbour and go to war over such a provision as this, and yet it is about this that all the agitation is aroused. You may talk about provincial rights until the end of the chapter, but provincial rights has only a remote and distorted connection with this agitation that is existing in the province of Ontario to-day. Mr. Speaker, I am here to say that if it is a proper thing to have the name of God mentioned in our schools, if it is proper to supplement the religious teachings of the home and church with a Christian atmosphere in the school-room—and such a thing is declared proper by the leaders of all the churches—then the only practical way is to separate the children for this purpose. My hon. friend from Montreal (Mr. Ames) quoted the other day the opinion of the late Dr. King, principal of the Manitoba college in favour of teaching religion in the schools. He might also have quoted his successor Dr. Patrick, who is a strong advocate of religious exercises in our public schools. He might also have quoted the late Archbishop Macrae, primate of all Canada, who expressed very strong views on the same subject, and the leaders of the Methodist church in Manitoba. If then it is right and proper to have the name of God mentioned and honoured in our public schools and a short time devoted to religious teaching, the only practical way in which you can do that is to separate the children. It is beyond the wisdom of mortals, it is impossible for human ingenuity to devise a common religious ground upon which all can stand. But we are told that if the children are separated in school, they will be separated as citizens in manhood and womanhood. There is no doubt some little truth in that statement; but if we carry this idea to a logical conclusion, we must close all our denominational colleges and seminaries. Are there half a dozen hon. members in this House who are not supporting voluntary separate schools? I am at this moment, so are others on the other side of the House—not alone for theological purposes but for purposes of secular education. We hear a good deal about the boys of separate schools meeting the boys of public schools after hours and arguing the subject