

But, in fact, the Canadian ministers, representing the several provinces of the confederation, and dependent for their continuance in office upon their retaining the confidence of the confederate parliament, are most unlikely to disregard provincial rights under any circumstances; and any such abuse of power would be quickly followed by disastrous consequences to themselves.

At page 456 of 'Todd's Parliamentary Government in the Provinces' this dictum is further laid down:

The British North America Act does not contemplate or justify any interference with the exclusive powers which it entrusts to the legislatures of the several provinces.

If any higher authorities are wanted in support of the principle for which I am contending, than the right hon. minister and the Minister of Justice, there is the dictum which has already been quoted in this House of Sir Louis Davies, formerly Minister of Marine and Fisheries in the right hon. gentleman's government. What did he say in 1891 in parliament with regard to the provinces over education. He said:

My opinion is now and has been for years, that when that time comes you cannot withhold from the provinces so erected the right to determine for themselves the question of education in one way or the other. I would be the last to favour this parliament imposing on the people there any system of education, whether free or separate. I only claim that when a Bill is introduced to erect those Territories into provinces, it should contain a provision enabling the people of the provinces so created to decide what system of education they will have.

Again, the late Mr. Mills, at one time Minister of Justice in the right hon. gentleman's government, expressed himself as follows on the floor of this House in 1894:

When the people of the Territories, or any portion of the Territories, 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. It can give good advice, but it has no right to give commands.

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. I have my view as to what will be the best decision for them to arrive at, but I must not impose upon them my views as to how they should be governed after they have attained their majority.

Now, Sir, these are the dicta of two of the colleagues of the right hon. gentleman. And suppose they sat with him now their position would be diametrically opposed to his in forcing this clause 16 upon these provinces. It is a direct contradiction, a double contradiction, of the position which the right hon. gentleman takes. It is a position which would leave the right hon. gentleman nothing to say except that he differs with his own colleagues. The position then is this: The people of the Northwest Territories, diverse in their nature—necessarily so by

reason of the varied character of the immigration flowing into that country—are entitled by the constitution, as I contend, to regulate their own system of schools. They are entitled, under the working of the constitution, to say what their educational system should be. If this Bill becomes law, if the government does not change its mind with regard to this clause, as it has changed its mind since the Bill was introduced, then I say we are perpetuating in these newly-created provinces a state of things which the right hon. Prime Minister himself has characterized as burdensome and intolerable. We should be interfering with their rights; we should be exercising coercion upon them, and should be preventing them in the future from securing new-comers to fill their fertile lands, and will make them incapable of giving such an educational policy as will fit the needs of a growing people. The question has been raised as to whether there is any danger in the section as now introduced by reason of the very small amount of religious education allowed in the schools. I have not heard it said by any hon. gentleman on that side of the House, with the possible exception of the Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) that under clause 16 as now amended, the half hour following half-past three was all that could possibly be worked out of the clause. If it were intended only to mean that, possibly hon. gentlemen opposite might have been more frank in regard to it, and, on introducing it the second time after a full consideration, might have made it express just what was meant. But we are dealing with something the effect of which is far-reaching, a subject of great difference of opinion. It would be very instructive if this House could get a decisive and emphatic expression in plain English as to just what that clause really means. Several members of this House, when the right hon. gentleman introduced the Bill, doubtless wondered whether the clause as originally framed and subsequently amended was proposed from a burning desire to do justice to the Doukhobors, to the Galicians, to the Scandinavians, to the Icelanders, to the Mennonites and possibly to the Mormons that are filling up the Northwest provinces. Was it for that purpose, and labouring under a keen sense of the injustice done to these denominations and sects, that the right hon. gentleman provides means for all time for separate schools? If so, Sir, he might have mentioned it. He might at least have consulted them and consulted his Minister of the Interior who formulated and administered the policy which brought these different sects into that country. Since the Bill was introduced we have seen some reason why the Bill assumed this form. We have seen that with regard to certain clauses certain ministers of the Crown have not been consulted. Why? No explanation has been