

party or on any man, if the minorities in the Northwest Territories are not receiving all that they should receive, let us find out who is responsible for this state of things. Let us glance over the history of educational institutions in the Territories we are about to organize.

In 1875, when the Dominion parliament passed the Northwest Territories Act, was provided that the minorities, whether Catholic or Protestant, would have the right to establish separate schools and would not be called upon to pay taxes for any others but such schools. That was the only provision contained in that Act. In 1884, the legislature organized a system of education, similar, or almost similar, to that of the province of Quebec, and comprising, more particularly, a council divided into two boards, the one Catholic and the other Protestant. In 1888, the ordinances of 1884 were consolidated by the legislature.

However, in 1892, these ordinances of 1884-88, were repealed by the Northwest Territories legislature. The council of education was to be no longer divided into a Catholic and Protestant board, and was reduced to the mere rank of a consulting body. The new ordinance provided at the same time that teaching in the said schools would be given in English; but subsection 1 of section 83 provided that school commissioners might have elementary courses taught in the French language. Catholics endeavoured to have that ordinance disallowed by the Dominion government, who had authority to do so; however, the latter, by Order in Council dated February 5th, 1894, on the recommendation of Sir John Thompson, then Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, refused to disallow the ordinances of 1892 and 1893. Sir John Thompson's recommendation stated that the facts brought to the knowledge of the Governor in Council were not such as to warrant the disallowance of these ordinances. The latter provided that the council of education would no longer be divided into two boards and put the whole school system under the control of a single member of the government, who was to appoint inspectors, decide upon text books to be used, &c. The then government decided that the Northwest Territories legislature had the right to make these changes and to pass these ordinances. The ministers present at the sitting of council at which the order of February 5 was passed, were Sir John Thompson, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Sir Adolphe Caron, Sir Charles Tupper, Hon. Messrs. Costigan, Haggart, Ouimet, Patterson, Daly and Angers.

Now, at these various stages, what was the part taken by the right hon. present Prime Minister, who is now being accused of sacrificing the rights of the minority? Was it not the Northwest Territories legislature that passed those ordinances in 1884, and repealed them in 1892? Was it not the

party whose present leader is the hon. member for Carleton, that refused, in 1894, when it had the power to do so, to disallow those ordinances of 1892? How can the present government be fairly called upon to disallow ordinances which have been sanctioned by a previous government? Let us for a moment view the question from the standpoint of the majority in those Territories under whose unrestricted control these schools have been for thirteen years past. Would they willingly allow that control to be interfered with? How is it that the then government, under the leadership of a Catholic, Sir John Thompson, has been spared the aspersions of those good Catholics who are at the same time out-and-out Tories?

The government, through its leader, introduces two Bills for the provincial organization of two districts, that of Saskatchewan and that of Alberta. These two Bills are similar, and both contain a clause which, even taking into account the amendment which has been inserted since, ensures to the minorities those rights and privileges enjoyed by them since the passing of the 1892 ordinances. Once those provinces have been organized, the system of education in force at present will become for ever the lawful system of the country. The legislatures of the new provinces, should they desire to do so, will not be in a position to repeal it. Were they not sanctioned and guaranteed by the constitution, these rights of the minorities would be left entirely in the hands of immigrants who are coming to us from all parts of the world. Thanks to that provision contained in the Bill, minorities will retain separate schools to the extent they have them to-day. Without that guarantee, those rights might be taken away to-morrow at a mere whim of the legislatures.

The Autonomy Act and its amendments, now before the House, will render further interference impossible. The following are the advantages ensured to the minority by the said Act, under various circumstances and subject to the various provinces contained in the educational Acts:

A Separate school house, a Catholic teacher, Catholic trustees to superintend the school, the assurance that text books on history, geography, arithmetic, grammar, will not contain anything objectionable from the standpoint of the Catholic church, a half hour per day of religious teaching, exemption from taxation for the support of public schools, their share of public grants from the provincial government, an elementary course in French, at least two, out of five members of the board of education to be Catholics.

Such are, Mr. Speaker, the indisputable rights which the Autonomy Bill ensures to the Catholic minority in the Northwest. Thanks to the Autonomy Act these rights become sacred and indisputable.