

Sir, we are always ready and willing to acknowledge the sense of justice, the sense of what is right, which exists in the bosoms of the French-speaking citizens of Canada. But may I not, on behalf of my fellow countrymen in the Northwest of Canada, claim that they are animated by as just a spirit of what is right and fair? If the record is good in one case, it seems to me that some consideration at least should be given it in the other. I can appeal to the Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock), because I have in my hand an expression of similar sentiments uttered by him.

I shall cast my vote to have this matter settled by the people's representatives in the Northwest who are best able to settle it, or by such other tribunal as may be suggested after they shall have the fullest opportunity of inquiring into all the conditions of the country, believing, as I do, that neither the Northwest Council nor any other tribunal to which it might be relegated by this House will betray the trust reposed in it, but will act justly towards all the people without fear, favour or affection.

May I not ask my hon. friend the Postmaster General to believe that if this troublesome question is kept out of the arena of Dominion politics and is relegated by this House to the people of the Northwest Territories, the people of those Territories, through their representatives in parliament will not betray the trust reposed in them, 'but will act justly towards all the people, without fear, favour or affection.'

Mr. Speaker, education was assigned to the provinces. Let any necessary agitation in respect to education, in respect to the rights and powers of legislatures with regard to education, be confined to provincial limits. That is the true solution of the question. Let the Dominion interfere and the agitation will be widespread. My proposition is to let the people settle the question for themselves, and the agitation if any—and I do not believe there will be any considerable agitation—will be confined within narrow limits, and, in the end, will be settled by some reasonable compromise, because, after all, we can always safely trust to the good sense of the people in this regard. As I said before, I firmly believe that if this question had been left to the people of the new provinces, they would have dealt, and they will deal, fairly with the minority. But we must not oppress or coerce any part of the people to provide safeguards that have not a warrant in the constitution. The constitution of Canada does not always protect minorities by any definite safeguards. There are nearly 50,000 Nova Scotian electors who, at the last general election, voted for Conservative or independent candidates, and about 55,000 or 56,000 who voted for candidates supporting the government. There are to-day in parliament 18 men representing the 55,000 or 56,000 electors, and the 50,000 men who voted

for other candidates have not one single representative in parliament. What about the rights of that minority? Have these rights been safeguarded?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Have they been safeguarded in the sense which hon. gentlemen intend by this Bill? It is true that in one sense the eighteen men who have been elected represent the whole people of Nova Scotia; but in another sense these 50,000 electors to whom I refer have no representative in this parliament.

One further word I would like to say and it is this: That restrictions of this character imposed upon the majority for the benefit of the minority do not always work out in the way intended. For example subsection 3 of section 93 of the British North America Act provides:

Where in any province a system of separate or dissentient schools exists by law at the union, or is thereafter established by the legislature of the province an appeal shall lie to the Governor General in Council from any Act or decision of any provincial authority affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subject in relation to education.

If the people of Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick, or Prince Edward Island, tomorrow were to establish separate schools by law, they would at once bring themselves within the purview of Dominion interference. Because, it is not only from any act or decision prejudicially affecting these rights established before confederation that the appeal would lie, but from any act or decision of a provincial authority in any wise affecting such rights or privileges that the appeal will lie. And the very fact that there is a restriction of that kind may possibly act as a deterrent in these three provinces to which I have called attention.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having so long detained the House; I had hoped to conclude in a very much shorter time. I trust that I shall not be misunderstood by any of my fellow-countrymen with regard to the position I have taken in this matter. I base my case and my contention upon the terms of the constitution. I do not argue against separate schools; I do not argue for separate schools. It is not for me to determine that question for the people of the Northwest; it is for the people of the Northwest, under the terms of the constitution, to determine that matter for themselves. I shall always endeavour to respect the opinions of my fellow-countrymen, of whatever race and of whatever creed. But I do not think it is wise to attempt to step outside of the limits of the constitution to provide remedies which have no warrant within the terms of our national charter. The battle cry of hon. gentlemen opposite in 1896 was 'Hands off