

ago—a speech delivered at Regina about the 19th or 20th of March last—told us that this Bill must be in the nature of a contract between the Northwest Territories and the rest of this country—a contract made, as the premier of the Northwest Territories has pointed out, between the great majority of the people of this country and the minority who live in the Territories; an agreement to be made between five and one half millions of the people of Canada residing in the seven existing provinces and the half million people who reside in the Northwest Territories. These 500,000 people have a government. That government was summoned here to Ottawa for the purpose of conferring with a special committee of the Privy Council in regard to the terms of this measure. It was to be a matter of contract, so the ex-Minister of the Interior told us. Well, one would suppose that, under these conditions, at least the representatives of the Northwest Territories would have been consulted about all the important provisions of this Bill. Does my right hon. friend remember how he swelled with indignation in 1896 when he charged Sir Charles Tupper across the floor of this House with having trampled upon the liberties of the people of Nova Scotia in passing through a moribund legislature the resolutions relating to confederation? Does he remember how he advocated the rights of the people at that time? Does he forget how he accused Sir Charles Tupper of having trampled upon the dignity of a proud people who would never forget that treatment? But at least this can be said in favour of the measure which Sir Charles Tupper caused to be passed at that time, that it went before the representatives of the people and was considered by them in parliament, even if it were a moribund parliament. But, the Prime Minister, if we are to believe the statements contained in the letter of Mr. Haultain, has seen fit to bring down to the parliament of Canada certain provisions in this measure without even deigning for one moment to consult the representatives of the people in those territories. We see the constitutional advocate of the liberties of the people of ten years ago changed into the—may I say—tyrant of to-day? What are the words of Mr. Haultain?

I must take strong exception to the way in which the subject of education has been treated both in the conferences and in the Bills. I must remind you of the fact that your proposition was not laid before my colleague or myself until noon of the day upon which you introduced the Bills. Up to that time the question had not received any attention, beyond a casual reference to it on the previous Friday, and I certainly believe that we should have had an opportunity of discussing your proposals before twelve o'clock on the day the Bills received their first reading. No such opportunity, however, was afforded, as unfortunately, you were not able to be present at the session when this section was submitted; neither was Sir William Mulock.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

The same day! The same day!

I feel sure that you will acquit me of any feeling in the matter other than that such an important subject should have been fully discussed before any definite conclusion was arrived at by the government and before the Bills dealing with it were laid before parliament.

Now, can any hon. gentleman on either side of the House, looking at the situation as I have endeavoured to present it to the House in a few words, say in his heart that the declaration made by Mr. Haultain in the sentences I have just read is an unreasonable one? He is here as the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories, having behind him the entire people of the Northwest Territories as voiced by their representatives in parliament and he is called here to confer about this Bill. It is handed to him, in so far as this provision is concerned, two or three hours before the right hon. gentleman presents the measure to parliament and handed to him without any opportunity of discussion with the Prime Minister, without any opportunity of discussion with the Postmaster General and without apparently any opportunity of discussion except with one or two members of the administration for a few moments and a few moments only.

Well, I do not know what my right hon. friend will make of all this. He did not consult the hon. ex-Minister of Interior who specially represents the people of the Northwest Territories; he did not consult the Minister of Finance who is especially concerned with the financial features of this Bill; he did not consult, in so far as this part of the measure is concerned, the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories and his colleagues. The question naturally arises: Whom did he consult? I can only answer that question in one way. It seems to me that he must have consulted the seven gentlemen from the Northwest Territories who are elected as Liberals and these provisions are the result of their collective and united wisdom. He postponed this measure in order that he might have the benefit of the wisdom of ten gentlemen from the Northwest Territories. He did not get as many as he thought he would get; he got seven and I presume that the educational provisions of the measure which has been brought down are the result of the advice and assistance of the seven gentlemen who sit on that side of the House for the moment. Assuming that to be the case—and we must assume that it is the case in the silence of these gentlemen—is it good constitutional practice after all, to put to one side the Minister of the Interior when he is about to return, to put to one side the Minister of Finance, to put to one side the Prime Minister of the Northwest Territories and his colleagues and to follow altogether the advice of these seven gentlemen who have evidently drafted the educational clauses