

a minority by a legislature after confederation was taken away, the minority had a right of appeal to Ottawa in order to secure their just rights. On those terms, Sir, the Protestants of Quebec and the Roman Catholics of Ontario came into confederation. My hon. friend (Mr. Sifton) seems to be oblivious of the terms on which Manitoba came into confederation. It came in under very peculiar circumstances. The people of Manitoba treated with the people of the Dominion and made a compact. The Protestants and Roman Catholics in Manitoba alike wished to have a provision for separate schools. We all know the history of these things; we know that it was uncertain whether the Roman Catholics or the Protestants would be in the majority in Manitoba, and it being wholly uncertain whether there would be an invasion of Roman Catholics from Quebec that would make Manitoba a Catholic province, or an invasion of Protestants from England and Ontario which would make it a Protestant province, the Roman Catholics and Protestants combined in asking the legislature to make such provisions that the minority would have separate schools. And so it was that the Act was passed, an Act not worth very much on its face, but being a compact between the people of Manitoba and this Dominion, the Act passed by this House was validated by the imperial parliament, and therefore it is a good law to-day. What is the position of the people of Manitoba? They came in under an express bargain which provided for separate schools. They have, under section 93, the express right of appeal to this parliament at Ottawa in case they should be deprived of any right after they had come into confederation.

Well, Sir, when they came into confederation they were, as everybody supposed, given their separate schools. My hon. friend from Brandon (Mr. Sifton) this afternoon attacked gentlemen on this side, because, he said, we wished to restore these inefficient schools. But he must remember that one of the conditions we insisted on was that the old inefficiency should be done away with; and Roman Catholics were willing to agree that the schools should be made efficient. All that we on this side wished to do was, as loyal Canadians to stand by our word and keep the honour of Canada unsullied.

The appeal came to Ottawa. As the Prime Minister said, the highest court in the realm, the Privy Council decided that it was intended to give separate schools to Manitoba, and that this legislation was strong enough to give them had it been properly based. But, as a matter of fact, owing to the circumstance that the schools were not there under the law or in practice before Manitoba entered confederation, they had failed, and they were not entitled under the law, to the separate schools. The

Roman Catholics, having appealed to the courts, like good subjects bowed to the decision, but they came to us for a law to remedy their grievance. And the reason why I say the right hon. gentleman has wiped that clause out of the statute-book and deprived minorities throughout the Dominion of the protection they had, is that no one can conceive of any circumstances under which any province could come to Ottawa with a stronger case than that with which Manitoba came here. Every one knew that separate schools were meant to be given, that the attempt was made to then give it, and that it was believed that that attempt was effective. Every one knew that Manitoba itself understood that the separate schools were established. And, under these circumstances, the strongest that could arise, the minority in Manitoba came asking us not to coerce the province, but to give the minority the rights which, it was intended to give them. And when the government of the day, though anxious to live up to the spirit of confederation and protect minorities, they were prevented from doing so by the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). If the local legislature of Quebec should repeal every law that has been made to assist the Protestant minority since confederation—and many of them have been passed—if the provincial legislature of Ontario should repeal the laws under which the separate schools of that province have been maintained, they have the legal power to do it. It is beyond question that to-day every single privilege in regard to their schools that the Protestants of Quebec and the Catholics of Ontario enjoy, they owe to generosity and forbearance of the majority. All the provisions for the protection of separate schools under the constitution are practically worthless because they are unworkable. Therefore, I say the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) should speak with some reticence on the educational question in view of the lamentable experience of the minorities of this Dominion solely through the attitude taken by the right hon. gentleman himself. I would not have dealt with this subject of Manitoba, had it not been referred to by the Prime Minister in presenting the Bill, and last evening by the Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) and this afternoon by the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) their utterances on the subject making it necessary to say a few words to show in what way they have misconceived the position of the Conservative party at that time. If the right hon. gentleman has misconceived the attitude of his opponents at the time when he came into power we may excuse him if he has forgotten some things which he might well have remembered when he brought this Bill down for the consideration