

principle involved, and I hope to be able to show in the few remarks with which I propose to detain the House before I close that there is no great matter of principle involved in this measure, and if seven out of ten representatives from the Northwest Territories are satisfied that this is a good law for the people, who shall dare to say that we are coercing the people of the Northwest Territories? I would say, Sir, that any argument which is designed to prove that we are dealing in this matter in the way of coercion is entirely unjustifiable. What is this law which we are going to confirm and to continue in the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan? We are told that this provides for a system of separate schools. Well, a system of separate schools may mean one thing in one quarter and another thing in another quarter. It is, in a measure, a system of separate schools. That expression in the minds of many people means a great deal. I do not think I am mistaken when I say that in the minds of a great many Protestant people in the country when you talk about separate schools they immediately understand that you are talking about schools that come under the control of some religious body, and particularly schools which come under the control of the Roman Catholic church. That is the common idea of separate schools in many quarters. Whatever may be said as respects other countries, or other provinces, it would be utterly mistaken to say that we are giving to the Northwest Provinces separate schools in that sense of the words. I submit to this House that the system of schools which we have to-day in the Northwest Territories is a national school system, and if it has all the elements of a national school system then I say there is no principle involved in this discussion which would justify us in having a quarrel over it. What is this system? One would suppose from the frequent references that are made to it that it is some iniquitous system, something which if continued would prejudice the interests of the people in these Territories for all time to come. The system of schools which prevails to-day in the Northwest Territories exists by virtue of chapters 29, 30 and 31 of the ordinances of the Northwest Territories. So far as the principle of separate schools is concerned, of course, that principle was to be found in the Act of 1875 and the ordinances adapted themselves to it. But if you read these three ordinances of the Northwest Territories you will rise from the perusal of them with the conviction that in that country they have a system of national schools which may well challenge the admiration of the people in other portions of this country. What then are the essential elements of national schools? I take it for granted that if you have a school which is established by the public authorities, if the management

Mr. FIELDING.

of the school derives all its authority and privileges from a regulation of the government of the state, if you have a system of schools under which the proper authorities of the state, or the province, or territory as the case may be, themselves specify the school books, establish the course of study, provide for the inspection of the schools and for the distribution of the money, if you have all those elements, then, I say you have a system of state-created, state-managed and state-supported public schools. Every one of these conditions exists to-day in the public school system of the Northwest Territories. A member of the government of the Territories becomes commissioner of education and the powers of the commissioner are set forth in detail. I shall only read the clause under the heading of 'Regulations of the Department.' These regulations are to be made by the commissioner himself, a member of the government, with the approval of the Governor in Council. Section 6 of chapter 29 says:

The commissioner, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, shall have power:

1. To make regulations of the department—
 - (a) For the classification, organization, government, examination and inspection of all schools hereinbefore mentioned;
 - (b) For the construction, furnishing and care of school buildings and the arrangement of school premises;
 - (c) For the examination, licensing and grading of teachers and for the examination of persons who may desire to enter professions or who may wish certificates of having completed courses of study in any school;
 - (d) For a teachers' reading course and teachers' institutes and conventions;
2. To authorize text and reference books for the use of the pupils and teachers in all schools hereinbefore mentioned as well as such maps, globes, charts and other apparatus or equipment as may be required for giving proper instruction in such schools;
3. To prepare a list of books suitable for school libraries and to make regulations for the management of such libraries.
4. To make due provision for the training of teachers.

What is there, Sir, in all this to which anybody can take exception? These details constitute the essential elements of a national school system. That system prevails to-day in the Northwest Territories, and that system we propose to continue by the legislation which we have presented in this House. The difference between a minority school and a majority school in the Northwest Territories is so exceedingly small that he who would attempt to make a definition of it would find himself in difficulty. The difference is with respect to one half hour's instruction in religious matters at the close of the school. The school laws of the Northwest Territories provide for religious instruction, not as a matter of obligation; they empower the trustees to authorize religious instruction within cer-