

to my hon. friend: The delegates from Rupert's Land and the Northwest ask that the French language and the separate schools shall be granted in the province which was to cover the whole of Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories. What is Rupert's Land? Rupert's Land is all the territory which is washed by the waters which flow into Hudson Bay and Hudson straits. It is a very large territory. What is the Northwest? It is all the territory which was not included in Rupert's Land and therefore the whole of the territory which the delegates asked to be included in one province was Rupert's Land, which comprised part of Keewatin, part of Manitoba, the whole of Saskatchewan, the whole of Alberta and part of Mackenzie. Mackenzie which was washed by the waters of Mackenzie river was the Northwest Territories. It was asked that the whole of this territory should be organized into one province. The prayer of the petition was not granted. It was restricted to the province of Manitoba and therefore my hon. friend will not find it here, but if he refers to the Manitoba Act he will find that the province of Manitoba was organized on the petition of these delegates but not organized as they had asked it. The new province was confined to a very small portion of that which they had asked to be organized into a province and in which they had asked for the right to use the French language and to establish separate schools. Therefore, it is useless to say that the French language has been introduced into the Northwest, Rupert's Land, Mackenzie and Saskatchewan.

Mr. MONK. My right hon. friend will allow me to observe that the petition was granted as far as the Northwest Territories was concerned by the legislation which subsequently followed.

Mr. BERGERON. In 1877.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Nothing of the kind. I have only to refer to the petition. What is the petition?

That the Territories heretofore known as Rupert's Land and the Northwest shall not enter into the confederation, except as a province, to be styled and known as the province of Assiniboia, and with all the rights and privileges common to the different provinces of the Dominion.

All these Territories were not introduced as a province. Only the province of Manitoba was introduced as a province and therefore the petition of the delegates was not taken into consideration. I can imagine what was the answer made by Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald to the delegates: You are asking too much altogether. Here, you have just a handful of people in the Northwest Territories, you have a mere fraction of population upon the banks of the Red river near Fort Garry, and you

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

are asking to have a whole province established at once which would cover millions of acres of land. The petition has no sense; it cannot be granted. We will give you the province of Manitoba which will cover the Red River colony and as to the future we will keep that in reservation to deal with later on.

Mr. BERGERON. Were they deprived of their rights and privileges?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend has argued that there is a constitutional compact. I admit there was a compact so far as Manitoba is concerned, but there was no compact with regard to Rupert's Land except Manitoba. Therefore the whole argument of my hon. friend is absolutely without foundation. It is true, that the parliament of Canada at that time would not accede to the petition on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, and eight years later, in 1875, when Mr. Mackenzie introduced the Act for the government of the Northwest Territories, a clause was introduced with regard to the schools, but that clause was introduced not as a result of this compact or of the petition of the delegates, but on the ground that it might avoid the difficulties which had taken place in other provinces, in regard to the education question. There was not a word as to the petition which had been presented in 1870; there was not a word said about the Bill of Rights; all that was said was: let us introduce a school clause as a matter of policy and to avoid the heart burnings and the friction and the bad blood which resulted elsewhere because separate schools were not granted. In the original law introduced by Mr. Mackenzie in 1875, there was not a single word about the language; it referred only to the schools. Two years afterwards an amendment to that law was brought from this House to the Senate by Mr. Girard, then a member of the Senate, asking for the introduction of the French language into the Territories. Did Mr. Girard base his case upon the ground laid down by the hon. member for Jacques Cartier and the hon. member for Beauharnois; did he base his case upon the ground of an agreement or a compact or a Bill of Rights? No. Mr. Girard supported his case upon the ground of expediency, necessity and justice. Mr. Girard based his case on the fact that at that time there were as many French speaking people in the Territories as there were English speaking people. He said: I believe the French Canadians are just as numerous and more numerous than the English speaking people in the Northwest Territories and you cannot refuse us the use of our language. It was on that ground that the use of the French language was granted in 1877. It was not granted as the result of a compact or as a constitutional right, but simply as a concession to the inherent sentiments of justice.