

I do not propose to discuss it this afternoon. There is just one thing, however, that I would like to say about it, and that is that I understand that up to the present time there has been really no school question, to use the common expression, in the Northwest Territories of Canada; and I sincerely trust that on both sides of the House we will not seek to make this a political question in any sense.

From my point of view I was very much disgusted with that declaration. I was here prepared to oppose legislation of this kind and I think there were several other hon. members—perhaps not very many—who were prepared to do the same thing. Then the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) returned and resigned saying that he could not accept the principles of clause 16. For one month we were delayed, nothing was done and I think it may fairly be said that the right hon. leader of the government was sparring for wind. Everybody was wondering what was going to be done by the hon. leader of the opposition. Everybody wanted to know what the great Conservative party was going to do upon this question. We had to wait a month during which time there were petitions filed and meetings of protest held. There were meetings of protest held which hon. gentlemen opposite did not attend. The hon. member for Lennox (Mr. U. Wilson) rather jeered and sneered at my daring to attend a meeting of protest, but I will cast back the sneer and the jeer. I ask: Where were the hon. members from Toronto when a meeting was held in that constituency to protest against the passing of any such legislation? They were not present and yet they are influential members of the party and men of prominence in the country. A compromise was effected and the Bill was brought down for the second reading on the 22nd March. I am not able myself to accept the compromise. I am not able to agree with it. I am going to oppose it. But, I do not think that the hon. leader of the opposition has spoken as he ought to have spoken upon this question. I reiterate and I repeat that when the predecessor of the leader of a party, who also occupied the position of the leader of the government and of attorney general of the Dominion of Canada, I refer to Sir John Thompson, makes a declaration that when this important juncture arrived we shall be free to act as we see fit, that that declaration ought to be binding on the party of which he was the leader. Now, Sir, what do we find? That the leader of the opposition does not apparently agree with me in that opinion, nevertheless I do put it forward as my idea of the duty of the leader of a great party. The leader of the opposition preferred to take a different course. He made a very eloquent speech, his diction was of the best; but, I cannot pronounce the same encomium upon him when he came to announce his

policy. He said: The constitution applies automatically; let the constitution take its course. Let me ask him if that is in consonance with the declaration which his predecessor Sir John Thompson, made in 1894.

Mr. LENNOX. Will the hon. gentleman mention where the leader of the opposition said the constitution would apply automatically?

Mr. L. G. McCARTHY. I have the impression that he made the statement.

Mr. LENNOX. When that statement was made in the House on a previous occasion, I heard the leader of the opposition deny it and the hon. gentleman who made the statement had to take it back. If the hon. gentleman knows where that statement is contained in the speech of the leader of the opposition, well and good, but if not he should not make the observation.

Mr. L. G. McCARTHY. I have no desire to misrepresent anybody but I have not heard the denial of the leader of the opposition. If the leader of the opposition did not make the statement, then I am not able to arrive at a conclusion as to what his speech meant, because he did say: let the constitution take its course.

Mr. LENNOX. No doubt of that.

Mr. L. G. McCARTHY. And he did argue that the British North America Act applied ipso facto to these provinces, whether you legislate here that it should do so or not.

Mr. LENNOX. I am not able to contradict the assertion that the leader of the opposition did argue that the British North America Act would apply ipso facto, but I heard the leader of the opposition declare that he did not state that it would apply automatically.

Mr. L. G. McCARTHY. I do not wish to get into an acrimonious controversy on that point with my hon. friend.

Mr. LENNOX. That is not my intention either.

Mr. L. G. McCARTHY. The leader of the opposition may not have used the word 'automatically,' but will the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lennox) not admit that if the leader of the opposition declared the British North America Act would apply ipso facto to these provinces, then, it must apply automatically? The hon. gentleman (Mr. Lennox) is, I understand going to follow me, and I leave that nut with him to crack. The leader of the opposition made a four hour speech in which he argued along the lines that the British North America Act would apply to these new provinces ipso facto or in other words 'automatically' and I ask any hon. gentleman in this House whether it is not a fact that the leader of the opposi-