

day we have new features affecting that question and so affecting the question which we are now discussing; and I will venture to refer to the statement of the Hon. Colin Campbell which appears in to-day's papers. Yesterday we had a number of ministers speaking, and the tone of their remarks was that although you could not depend upon the statement of the Hon. Mr. Rogers, you could depend upon that of the Hon. Mr. Campbell, but that he would not speak—he had too much discretion to speak. But he speaks, and speaks definitely to-day.

Before I refer to that, however, I might refer to a matter that casts a light upon the extent of the privileges to be enjoyed by the minority in the Northwest in case this Act goes through in the form proposed. We have heard the statement constantly made, and it comes more particularly from the Minister of Finance, that as a matter of fact, when you analyze the Acts, there is really nothing objectionable in the kind of schools which the government are imposing upon the people of the Northwest—that there is only half an hour of religious instruction after the school is dismissed, and that the schools are only separate schools in name, but not in fact. Let us see whether or not that is the fact. In 1897 the leader of the government said:

The only thing I care for is that, whereas, under the Act, 1890, they had not the privilege of teaching their own religion in the schools, by the concessions which have been made, whether they are concessions or new rights or a restoration of old rights, they will have the right hereafter of teaching their own religion in the province of Manitoba.

Further on he said this:

Well, the moment I found that the people of Manitoba were ready to make concessions which practically restored to the Catholics the right of teaching the French language and of teaching their own religion in the schools, I submitted to my fellow countrymen in the province of Quebec that it was far better to obtain those concessions by negotiation than to endeavour to obtain them by means of coercion.

Further on he said:

And I venture at this moment to say that there is not a man in the province of Quebec, there is not a man in this country, who, looking at the settlement unbiassed and unprejudiced, will not come to the conclusion that it was a happy solution of a very difficult situation indeed.

That is the statement of the premier, and it is to the effect, that he had carried on his negotiations in the west, and had obtained this concession, mainly that the minority would have the privilege of teaching their religion and the French language in the schools. Now, that seems to be all that the most extreme advocate of separate schools asks. Then, turning to the statement of the Papal ablegate, I find this:

I urged my request on the ground of fairness and justice and referring to his mission to

Ottawa I remarked that from the point of view of the Manitoba government some action on these lines would be politically expedient and tend to facilitate the accomplishment of his object, inasmuch as Catholics in any territory which might be annexed to Manitoba would naturally object to losing the right they had to separate schools and to be subjected to the educational conditions which existed in Manitoba.

Now, if you go back from that to the statement of the Prime Minister which I have just read, namely, that by his negotiations in 1896 he had secured for the minority of Manitoba separate schools, in the sense of having their religion taught in the schools and of having the enjoyment of the French language secured to them; what is the result of taking these two matters together? It is that you have religion taught in the schools, and in addition to that, you have some greater advantage in the west. According to the ablegate, there is a broad distinction between the west and Manitoba—distinction which is in his opinion sufficient to bar the way to an extension of territory for Manitoba on the ground that the people in the added territory would not enjoy equal privileges with those that they now enjoy. That lets in a pretty important side light as to the actual intention of this legislation. It shows that the government are not honest or fair, and that the statements of hon. gentlemen opposite are not correct when they say that this provision has been whittled down to almost nothing, and that under it there will be only separate schools in name but not in fact. Let me say, although I do not propose to-day to discuss the legal question, that it will be found, if the argument of the ex-Minister of the Interior is correct—and certainly he above all others should be in a position to judge of that matter, having, as he said, special means of studying the school question—that the ordinances do not pare down the rights of the minority in the west, and that the schools provided for in 1875 will be the class of schools that will be maintained under the Act now before the House. And there is good reason for that, although the Postmaster General has thrown out the suggestion that the government will dispute the law of the Minister of the Interior in that regard. If you turn to the Act now before the House, you will find that it embraces all the subsections of section 93 of the British North America Act with the exception of subsection 1. That subsection does not deal with separate schools, but with denominational schools, and therefore has no bearing in Canada, where we have not what are properly known as denominational schools. The substituted subsection is:

Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to separate schools—