

provincial autonomy for the west—not a limited autonomy, not a measure where something was given and something withheld? The fact that he said he would deal with the question of provincial autonomy carries with it the full meaning, and no other meaning could be taken out of the statement by the people of the Northwest Territories, than that they were to be granted full provincial autonomy. Does 'provincial autonomy' mean a half measure? Does it mean that this parliament is going to give these provinces the right to do certain things and withhold from them the right to do certain other things that provinces should do? No; the plain meaning is that the right hon. gentleman proposed to give these provinces self-government, because if autonomy means anything at all it means self-government, full, complete, absolute; the right and power to administer their own affairs on every question that is delegated to them by the British North America Act. And, Sir, amongst the powers delegated to the provinces under the British North America Act, is the power to deal with education. On the eve of an election, when the right hon. gentleman wanted to secure for his candidates in that country the votes of the people, he tells them that he will consider the question of provincial autonomy. Did he hint for one moment that he only intended to give them a partial measure? Did he announce that he intended to hold back one of the most cherished rights that can be given to a people in a measure of autonomy? No, he told the people that he would give them provincial autonomy, self-government, full and complete. The result of his statement was that the question of provincial autonomy was not an issue in the elections in the Territories, because Conservatives as well as Liberals were pledged to grant the Territories self-government and to create them into new provinces. The right hon. gentleman had a decided advantage when he succeeded in getting that question out of the political arena during the political campaign and allowing the electors to decide on other issues altogether. I do not like to use an expression that might seem unkind, but I am bound to say that the right hon. gentleman certainly did mislead the people of the west. Not only did he mislead those in authority there, but he misled the entire electorate, by leaving them under the impression that they were going to get their fullest rights as citizens and free men unrestricted and untrammelled. It is not using too strong a term when I say that the right hon. gentleman, wittingly or unwittingly, misled the people of that great country on the eve of the general elections, and the result was that the right hon. gentleman succeeded in obtaining a majority of the representatives from these Territories to support him. Had he hinted for a moment that he intended to withhold from

the people the right to deal with their educational matters as they thought best in their own interests, I have no hesitation in saying that he would not have had returned from these vast Territories a single man to support his government.

I have said that if autonomy means anything it means government full and complete; this Bill has been called an autonomy Bill, and in this House and in the country we speak of it as an autonomy Bill. That is entirely a misnomer; it is not an autonomy Bill. To use an illustration we sometimes speak of a joint stock company and after it we find the word 'limited;' so in this sense when we speak of this as an autonomy Bill we should call it an autonomy Bill limited. I confess that I am surprised to hear so many people speaking of this as an autonomy Bill, when as a matter of fact it is only limited autonomy. In 1875 the Northwest Territories were organized under an Act of this parliament and were given what we call a territorial charter. Under that charter they were enabled to administer their local affairs, to construct bridges, to administer their educational affairs in a limited way, and to do what is generally done by any provincial government. The Territories were not then given the full status of a provincial government. I do not think it is seriously contended by any one in this House or out of it that that Territorial Act was ever intended to be permanent. I apprehend that those who sat in this House in 1875 realized the fact that that law would only remain in force until these Territories were divided into provinces, and that when that time came then the Territorial Act would be wiped out and the new constitution take its place. We can all realize that this was the object of the parliament of Canada in 1875, when we remember that at that time that country was practically uninhabited there not being more than 500 white people living in it, or practically not more than one adult male to every 2,000 square miles.

That population, we are told, has been increased to 500,000, and in the lifetime of many hon. members sitting in this House to-day, or at any rate within another quarter of a century, the population of those two provinces will possibly be 5,000,000. Will any hon. gentleman suggest that the opinion of 500 people in 1875 should be held to fix and determine what the constitution of that country should be fifty years afterwards, when it contains a population of 5,000,000? I hold that there is neither rhyme nor reason in the statement—I will not call it an argument—that because the Act of 1875 granted a dual system of schools, we ought to continue that system under the conditions that exist at the present time. In all probability those 500 people were never asked what kind of constitution they wanted. Possibly one or two of the prominent men of that country were aware that a constitution was