

Now, Sir, I maintain that before we undertake to pronounce judgment on this Bill we should have a fair understanding of the school system in use in the North-west Territories under the provisions of those ordinances. It is only natural that when the people of Ontario hear the term 'separate schools' they should think of the separate schools as they exist in that province. When the people of Manitoba hear the expression 'separate schools' they think of the inefficient schools which they abolished in 1890. I feel sure that if the people of the other provinces understood our school system there would not be a great deal of opposition to the educational clause of this Bill in its present form. I believe the people of the west are willing to give to any minority any privilege to which they can show a claim, and they will give it the more cheerfully and criticise it the less closely because in this case it not only does not injure, but it increases the usefulness of our school system. Our schools are in truth national schools. No religious sect, no denomination, no association, no society has anything to do directly or indirectly with the secular education of the children attending any of our schools. They are completely and absolutely under the control of the government. In all our schools the same course of studies is followed. Practically the same text books are used. The teachers have to pass the same examinations and get the same training at the same normal school. All have the same holidays and vacations, and all undergo the same rigid inspection and the government grant is apportioned to all the same basis.

I desire to read a few short extracts from the School Ordinance that applies in this case. Section 4 reads as follows :

The department shall have the control and management of all kindergarten schools, public and separate schools, normal schools, teachers' institutes, and the education of deaf, deaf mute and blind persons.

Section 6 is as follows :

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 ;

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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.

Then there is section 136 :

All schools shall be taught in the English language, but it shall be permissible for the board of any district to cause a primary course to be taught in the French language ;

(2) The board of any district may subject to the regulations of the department employ one or more competent persons to give instruction in any language other than English in the school of the district to all pupils whose parents or guardians have signified a willingness that they should receive the same, but such course of instruction shall not supersede or in any way interfere with the instruction by the teacher in charge of the school as required by the regulations of the department and this ordinance ;

(3) The board shall have power to raise such sums of money as may be necessary to pay the salaries of such instructors and all costs, charges and expenses of such course of instruction shall be collected by the board by a special rate to be imposed upon the parents or guardians of such pupils as take advantage of the same. C.O., c. 75, s. 109.

Section 137 is as follows :

No religious instruction except as hereinafter provided shall be permitted in the school until one-half hour previous to its closing in the afternoon, after which time any such instruction permitted or desired by the board may be given.

(2) It shall, however, be permissible for the board of any district to direct that the school be opened by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. C.O., c. 75, s. 110.

Now, these are the sections in the North-west Territories Ordinances, 1901, that apply in this case. I am not going to enter into a discussion on the advisability of having religious instruction in schools, but it is a well-known fact that many Protestants as well as Roman Catholics desire to have some religious instruction given in the schools. Now, to meet the wishes of such people as these, we permit the giving of religious instruction in the schools from 3.30 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon. In this we treat all alike, all schools have the same privilege. Separate schools will not be formed unless the trustees of a public school try to deprive the minority of their right in this respect. Let us suppose a case. Suppose that in a certain district a majority of the people are Roman Catholics and Roman Catholic trustees are elected. They will, we suppose, engage a Roman Catholic teacher. They will request or instruct him to give religious instruction in that school after 3.30 o'clock. The Protestant children of course are allowed to go home. If the parents or trustees of these children desire that their children should have religious instruction in that school, they will no doubt appeal to the trustees and ask that they