

having clearly in mind that he was legislating, not temporarily, but for all time to come.

And George Brown who did not support the legislation; what did he say?

The moment this Act passed and the Northwest became part of the union, they came under the Union Act, and under the provisions with regard to separate schools.

In the face of that language if the late Mr. Brown were still alive and had a seat in this House and were confronting the legislation which we have before us, what would he do? Support the protection to minority rights? Certainly. That therefore should I do even though I be as violent an opponent of the separate school as was Mr. Brown.

Take the late Mr. Dalton McCarthy; he proposed in the year 1894 in this House to do what was the duty of any one who had a seat in this House, and believed that the separate school in the Northwest Territories was an iniquity, an impropriety or an injury to the Northwest Territories. He proposed that they should be abolished so far as this House was concerned. He proposed to leave the people of the Northwest Territories free to abolish separate schools if they wished to do so, and one of the very reasons he urged was that if the separate school provision was not abolished until the moment when the Territories entered the union as provinces then it would be impossible ever to abolish separate schools in that Territory.

But looking at the whole history of the matter, we must remember that it was for Protestant minorities as well as for Roman Catholic minorities that this protection was placed in the British North America Act. I want to speak with perfect sincerity. This is a serious question especially for those of us who come from the Northwest Territories. I want to say, speaking as a Protestant, not as a member of the minority, that in view of the history of this matter I would be ashamed of myself as a Protestant and ashamed of the Protestant majority if we would wish now, merely because we have the power and because it is no longer our rights that will be affected, to use that power, to deny the very thing which we as Protestants stood out for when a Protestant minority was affected. The principle is there clear and distinct to me, as I think it must be to every man with an impartial mind.

It is urged against the Liberal party to-day that they are taking a course contrary to their course in 1896 in the Manitoba case. I do not think so. In 1896, as the right hon. gentleman who to-day fills the position as leader of this House expressed it:

The government is proposing a course which is a violent wrench of the principles on which our constitution is based.

Was he speaking truly or falsely? Was the course proposed in 1895 and 1896 a violent wrench? I think that nobody who understands the situation, especially nobody living in the country west of the great lakes and familiar with the sentiment of Manitoba, could deny that he was telling the truth. It was such a violent wrench that if that action had not been prevented by the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) the chances are that confederation would have been split into its original fragments. The hon. gentlemen opposite were taking a different course from what they are taking to-day, but then as now they were forgetting that constitutions are made for the provinces, not provinces for the constitution. The right hon. gentleman who now leads the House (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) was standing then for respect for established rights, the established right of the people of the province to have such a school system as they saw fit to have within its constitution. He is doing the same to-day, he is standing to-day for respect for the established rights of minorities in that area of country which is going to constitute these new provinces. Is he proposing any wrench of the principle of the constitution as the government of 1896 did? Why Sir, he is proposing the very opposite as has been conclusively proven by the extracts from speeches which I have read to the House. The principle of protection for minority rights is there in the constitution, and no impartial man, no man who wishes to be fair, can disregard the existence of that principle in the constitution; whether it is there by letter of law, whether the letter of the constitution would bear this interpretation, or not, there can be no successful denial of the fact that in providing as these Bills do, for the continuation to the minorities of exactly the rights they are enjoying when they enter this confederation as provinces, the government is purely and simply regarding the spirit of the Confederation Act.

There has been a good deal of cavil upon the point as to whether that area should be considered as a province before its entry or as a Territory. No person will deny or seek to deny that it is only a Territory but after all the human beings on the areas out there are just the same as they would be if they were in provinces, and their interests and conditions are practically not different at all from the conditions under the same institutions if the areas were provinces instead of being territories. On this point perhaps it will not be out of place for me to quote from a gentleman whose authority is very considerably respected at least by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule). Mr. Haultain said, speaking in the legislature at Regina in 1900:

We have been created what I may be allowed to call a political entity. We are for purposes