

In the province at the union ! In the province at the time that it joined the union, as for instance, Ontario and Quebec as the hon. Postmaster General admitted to-night. He said we have these schools here because we had them when we came into the union, and he then proves our case further by saying that Nova Scotia and New Brunswick do not have these schools because they did not have them when they came into the union, and that British Columbia did not have them when they came into the union. That was the reason why they did not have them. Now, here is where I begin to disagree with him. He says it is fair to say to the people in the Northwest : You are not a province, we are about to make you a province for the first time, we do not know whether you will establish separate schools or not but we will take you by the throat and make you do it. That is great logic. That is a wonderful argument to come from a statesman like the hon. Postmaster General, as he called himself two or three times to-night, although nobody applauded him when he did it. That was the logic that came from this would be statesman. If we apply his logic it means this : Here are people twenty-one years of age having the right to vote who have voted for a certain thing, being fully enfranchised and entitled to vote on the question, while on the other hand we are going to enfranchise another man who has not now a vote and make him vote what we direct all his life. That is a fair interpretation of the argument which the Postmaster General has made. We are going to say because we are creating a province that you shall do exactly what Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia did not have to do. Although British Columbia did not have to adopt a separate school system we say to these new provinces that if you come in you must establish a separate school system because they have one in Ontario and Quebec. No such thing was said to British Columbia. Prince Edward Island did not have to adopt the separate school system, but in regard to these new provinces we say : You have not a system of separate schools but we are going to make it certain you must have one because you cannot come into the union if you do not have separate schools as they have them in Ontario and Quebec. These other provinces were allowed to do as they liked. They were provinces that were fully enfranchised and entitled to make their own bargains. The hon. Postmaster General, the hon. Minister of Finance and the hon. Minister of Customs cannot see any distinction between enfranchising a man and letting him do as he likes after you have enfranchised him and taking a man by the throat and saying : You must do so and so or we will not enfranchise you at all. Both of these hon. gentlemen who are sitting beside each other at this moment and who spoke upon this question said that in effect. They did not

Mr. LANCASTER.

want to bother with the legal aspect of this question. The hon. Minister of Customs was very anxious to get away from the legal question. He said that Christopher Robinson's opinion was not quite the same as that of the hon. leader of the opposition, that they were both excellent lawyers—he spoke correctly about that—that the hon. the Minister of Justice disagreed with the legal opinion of these gentlemen and that he was a good lawyer. But I have not seen the opinion of the hon. Minister of Justice yet. The hon. Minister of Customs may know quietly, or through some secret channel of the cabinet, what the opinion of the hon. Minister of Justice is, but I do not know what it is. But, we will assume that it was contradictory of and different from the opinion of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition. What was the wise solution of the Minister of Customs ? What was the advice that he gave us in his great wisdom ? He says that as these lawyers differ about the question as to whether the Dominion of Canada has the power to go on and settle that question we should take the power.

The argument of the Minister of Customs was, that as the lawyers differed as to whether Canada has the power to enact this legislation, the wise thing to do to settle the question was for this parliament to take the power. It is an easy thing for the Minister of Customs to get away from the legal and constitutional aspect of the question, but it never occurred to him that there was a still more common sense solution, and that is that provinces could grant separate schools if they wanted to and nobody disputes that the provinces have the power—and that being so, it would be a wise thing to let the new provinces do as they like on the question of education. There is no dispute that the provinces have the power to legislate on education the whole dispute is whether the Dominion government has the right to force a particular system of education upon them. The Minister of Customs could not see that the easiest solution of the difficulty was for us to say : as there is a great difference of opinion as to whether we have the right to do this or not, and as there is no difference as to the right of the province to do it, then let us trust the province. And so these gentlemen opposite believing they have a good case for separate schools on the merits, should have no reason to fear. But that solution did not occur to the champions of provincial rights. Sir, in that beautiful garden city of St. Catharines in my fair county, early in the month of June, 1896, I heard the Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier appeal to return Mr. Gibson (now Senator Gibson) to this House, and Mr. Gibson was returned by a majority of nearly 500. On that occasion I heard the Prime Minister of Canada declare, that when it came to the question of coercing a province even at the instance of people who belonged to