

deal with it in one particular instance and the general power is given to the provinces. This is just the opposite when the Act deals with Dominion and provincial powers in all other matters; then the general power is given to the Dominion and the special powers to the provinces.

But supposing that we should pass this legislation, assuredly, in view of the divergence of opinion that exists regarding the meaning of the law we propose to enact, whichever side considers itself entitled to something more would at once proceed to find out what its rights are and endeavour to obtain them. And if it should turn out that by this measure we are re-enacting the statute of 1875, and if an inefficient and useless system of education should be established by virtue of this measure in these Territories for all time, I am satisfied that the right hon. gentleman and those associated with him would not care to have any such state of affairs put in force for all time. But if the effect of this legislation is to establish national schools, then with equal force do I come to the conclusion, in view of the speech the right hon. gentleman made in introducing this Bill that it was no part of his intention to propose any such legislation—under these circumstances I for one am absolutely opposed to the parliament of Canada meddling in the educational affairs of this country. I do not believe that we have the power; and if we had the power I do not believe it is good policy for this parliament to assume that it possesses the wisdom of all time and all the ages and that it is competent to give these people to-day the best system of education possible to last for centuries and without end.

Now it has been urged that if we apply the sections of the British North America Act, that matter will be left in uncertainty. Permit me to say that I dissent from that view. I dissent from it because I think, with all deference to those who differ, that were the educational clauses of the British North America Act to be given to these new provinces as their charter in this regard, subsection 1 would not apply to them, while subsection 3 would apply. And what would be the effect of it? Clearly the effect would be that these new provinces would start with full power to deal with all matters relating to education; but if the minority, by agitation or by any other means, obtained separate schools, then the new provinces would be bound to maintain that system or else become subject to remedial legislation. That assuredly is taking the matter out of the possibility of litigation, because I venture to think that if we deal fairly and reasonably with the people of the Northwest, if we give them the same provincial charter as is possessed by British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba, under which they have power to deal with their educational affairs,

MR. BRISTOL.

I venture to think that there will be no injustice done to the minority, and that we will have no further trouble in this great country with discussions of this character, which are most regrettable and the sections of the British North America tend to cause discord and dissension. I for my part am a firm believer in the national school system, but I none the less believe it to be the part of wisdom, of good policy and of broad statesmanship to allow the people of those new provinces to determine that matter for themselves.

I for one would be glad to see the day when people would forget, in discussing political affairs in this country, that they were Catholics or Protestants, that they belonged to any religious sect whatever. I would be glad to see the day when the people of this country, while they might be proud of their origin, would forget, in discussing political questions, that they were of French descent, or English descent or Irish descent. I would like to see all these matters dealt with on their merits, always provided that every section of the people received fair play. I desire to see such a state of affairs as that no class can consider themselves as the only tolerant people in this country, and that all classes recognize each other as animated by a feeling of kindness and generosity. I for one most strongly object to this new country having forced upon it, or placed upon it, by the parliament of Canada, at this distance and at this time, a system of education which its people will not be able to change, except by imperial legislation, so long as the centuries last. Why, Sir, what has been the experience of legislation of this kind in the past? Take the effect of prohibition laws in this country. There is no more unsuccessful way of inducing a man to do right than to endeavour to coerce him to do right. There is this further argument that I have seen advanced with respect to this matter, and that is that we cannot trust the people of these new provinces to do what is fair. Sir, I for one am entirely out of sympathy with such an argument. The people of the great west have gone in there from all of our great provinces, they have certainly shown themselves up-to-date, intelligent, and very able. If the school system, which so far they have been permitted to enact and to carry out, if such legislation as they have been permitted to pass during their tutelage, is a sample of what they can do, then I think we may safely entrust to the people of those new provinces full power to deal with their educational affairs, such powers as every other province has been given since confederation.

Now, Sir, I desire to say in conclusion, that I deeply and sincerely regret the misfortune which has placed me in the position of member for Centre Toronto in this House. If there was one man for whom