

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Why should not the people of the maritime provinces be in the same position?

Mr. BOURASSA. Certainly; but the great difference is that they were already self-governing provinces when they entered the confederation compact in 1867. They had a school system as well as a judicial system, under which they had lived for years. But the Northwest Territories were purchased by the people of Canada. The money which has been spent for the settlement of that country has been the money of Catholics as well as of Protestants, the money of French Canadians as well as of English Canadians. And in the words of Blake, of Mackenzie, of Sir Alexander Campbell, the people of Canada purchased that territory, designing to introduce there the principle of freedom in the matter of education so that the French and Catholic Canadians would be allowed to go there on an equality with the Protestants and English Canadians. When it comes to the time of taxes for the development of the Northwest, have you made an exception in favour of the Roman Catholic and the French Canadian? No. Then, why should the law, which is designed to provide for the education of all future generations, be made such that the French Canadian and Catholics will not feel as free in these Territories for the acquisition, defence and settlement of which they have as loyally given their share of self-sacrifice and money as have those of any other race or religion?

I need not go over again the ground of difference between Roman Catholic and Protestants with regard to education. That was discussed thoroughly on the second reading of the Bill. I need not again point out the difference between separate and public schools. I stand on the ground on which the Prime Minister stood on February 21st, when he compared the system of separate schools in Canada with the system in the United States and said he wanted to prevent the introduction into Canada of a system of schools which would produce the moral results we see in the United States. Therefore I adhere to the legislation introduced by the Prime Minister, and I refuse to alter my position even to please the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton). So, we have to choose between the law of 1875, which this parliament passed in the full exercise of its prerogative—as most clearly shown by the Minister of Justice—under the imperial statute of 1871, which law of 1875 must be binding upon the conscience of the parliament, and which is the only one the government can invoke to show that they are morally bound to give something to the minority,—between that and the ordinance of 1901 adopted by the legislature of the Northwest Territories contrary to the provisions of the law of 1875, the only law under which the legislature could act. In other words,

I stick to the law instead of to an ordinance which has been passed in defiance of the law, in defiance of the wishes of this parliament and of the moral pledges which we have taken, and which in itself is an unjust act as against the interests of the people for whom this legislation of 1875 was adopted.

Sir, the law of 1875 was adopted in order to give freedom of education to minorities in the Northwest Territories, whether Catholic or Protestant. Now, I put this question to the leader of the opposition: I say that the parliament in 1875 meant to give certain rights to the minorities in the Northwest Territories; and is my hon. friend prepared to put such a construction upon that statute of 1875 as that the first subsection thereof would have nothing to do with religious education, with the consequence that under such a construction nine-tenths of the minority would be deprived of the rights and privileges that were intended to be given to them?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The question, if the hon. gentleman wants me to answer it, seems to be a little involved; I do not know whether I fully understand it. I think it would be answered by the reply I gave to the Minister of Justice, which is in effect this—I will elaborate it. The government, through their Department of Justice, had given an opinion, which coincides with mine, as to the nature of the Act of 1875 passed by the parliament of Canada, and which can be amended by this same parliament. Parliament was not then establishing a province, it could have established a province—

Mr. BOURASSA. My hon. friend is not answering the question I put to him. I am not asking what might be the actual constitutional value of the Act, I am simply asking his opinion of the way it would affect the local majority and the local minority. In order to make myself clear I will read the Act, section 11:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council, by and with the consent of the council or assembly, as the case may be, shall pass all necessary ordinances in respect to education; but it shall therein be always provided, that a majority of the ratepayers of any district or portion of the Northwest Territories, or any lesser portion or subdivision thereof, by whatever name the same may be known, may establish such schools therein as they may think fit, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor; and further, that the minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish separate schools therein, and that, in such latter case, the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic separate schools shall be liable only to assessments of such rates as they may impose upon themselves in respect thereof.

Now, the other day I understood the hon. gentleman to say that the first part of this section with regard to the right of the local