

opinions have been quoted in this House, but I think we have it clearly shown that the Minister of Justice entertains the same view.

Now, I think it perfectly plain that this parliament has no power to pass this legislation. But, if this parliament had power to pass it, I would still oppose it upon the ground that it is an unwarrantable, flagrant invasion of provincial rights. Education is a matter essentially of provincial concern. What right have we sitting in this House, representing constituencies in other provinces, to pass a law imposing upon the people of the Northwest Territories any particular system of education? That is a matter that should be left entirely to the provincial legislatures of the Northwest. I submit that this parliament has no more right to impose upon the people of the Northwest such legislation as this Bill proposes than the people of the Northwest Territories in their new legislatures would have to pass a similar law to be applied to the province of New Brunswick. And we are passing a law not for this year or even for the term of this parliament for which we are here, but we are passing a law which will be binding upon the people of the Northwest for all time to come. It seems to me it is nothing short of a political outrage, a piece of tyranny for this parliament to attempt to impose such legislation for ever upon the people of the Northwest. Let me emphasize it in this way. We have here a House composed of 214 members, only 10 of whom represent constituencies in the Northwest, only 10 of whom, therefore, are responsible in any degree to the people who are affected by this legislation. The other 204 members who are to pass this law and impose it upon these people have no interest whatever in the educational system of the Northwest, no direct interest whatever, except the possible interest of seeing systems to which we have become attached in our own provinces established in the other provinces as well. I submit, therefore, that it is a most tyrannical thing for this parliament to put through such legislation as that now before us. In my judgment it is not a matter of separate schools or no separate schools; it is a matter of provincial autonomy, provincial rights and local self-government. And it seems to me a most striking spectacle that in this controversy it happens that those who have been in this House the most earnest and the most persistent advocates of home rule for Ireland are the most determined opponents of home rule for the west. But although it is not in my view a question of separate or no separate schools, I have no hesitation in saying that personally I am convinced that the common, national, non-sectarian school system is the one best adopted to the needs and aspirations of this country. I believe that such a system, whose tendency is to blend the various ele-

ments of our population into one broad, patriotic and homogenous Canadian citizenship, is preferable to a system which is based upon the principle of separation, and which seeks, not to unify, but to separate the youth of this land into different classes according to the religious dogmas which are professed by their parents, and in order that these dogmas may be instilled into them under the auspices of the state, and whose tendency therefore is to breed antagonism and discord rather than harmony in our citizenship. I am one of those who hold that the state, which is presumed to regard all people as citizens and as citizens only, and in the eye of which all are equal, without reference to their religious faith or whether indeed they have any religious faith at all, has no right to provide for the teaching of any particular religious belief under the auspices of the state. A good deal has been said regarding the character of the schools in the Northwest, and the argument is made that these schools are public and not separate in the true sense of the term. There can be, however, in my judgment, no question about this. There can be no doubt that this Bill distinctly provides for separate schools, and it does so for the purpose of enabling religious instruction to be taught in them. That is the only object of a separate school system. There can be no doubt also that this Bill compels every municipal body, wherever such bodies may be constituted in the Northwest, to collect the taxes of Roman Catholic citizens for the support of schools which are maintained as separate schools for the propagation of that religion. The Bill also provides that the separate schools shall share in whatever money may be voted by the legislatures of the new provinces for educational purposes, including the school land fund which is payable to the provinces, under section 25 of the Dominion Lands Act, which Act sets apart two sections in every township as an endowment in aid of education and provides that the proceeds of those lands, when sold, shall be invested in Dominion securities and form a fund, the interest on which shall be paid for the support of public schools. Yet we find that this Bill will divert a proportion of that fund which was distinctly established for the support of public schools. My hon. friend the Minister of Customs argued that we ought to pass this measure because it gives what is now the law in the Territories and what has been the law a long time past. If that be a good reason why this parliament should enact the legislation now proposed in respect of separate schools, I submit that it affords an equally good reason why we should not change the law relating to this specific trust fund. The only ground upon which any invasion of provincial rights could be justified would be that there is a