

which can in any way throw any light upon that law. We all know that the Act of 1875 was passed somewhat hurriedly; we know that section 11 was introduced after the other provisions of the statute had been discussed by the House. A subject of great importance, such as the question of education, was treated in a very short section and in very few words. It was passed with apparently no contentious discussion in the House; it was passed, as I remember, unanimously, and there was no discussion whatever as to the meaning and effect of the terms used. We know that in 1875, when this law was passed, it was but a few years after the passage of the British North America Act. It is a matter of history that in Canada so far as legislation is concerned the meaning of the words 'separate schools' is synonymous to 'denominational schools'; in the British North America Act the same sense was attached to it as to the words 'denominational schools.' We had only two kinds of schools in Canada at that time, viz., the public school and the separate school. Separate schools were introduced in Ontario in 1860, and they were then intended to be, and have ever since been, denominational schools. So it is in the province of Quebec; the separate schools of the province of Quebec are to-day denominational schools and so they are in Ontario. I appeal to any member in this House to point to me a single instance in any province of the Dominion where there is a separate school which is not, to all intents and purposes, a denominational school.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I understood that a great many members on the other side of the House have alleged that the separate schools in the Northwest are not denominational schools.

Mr. BELCOURT. As I understood it, the argument of gentlemen on this side is that the school which it is now intended to have under clause 16, No. 2, will be non-denominational schools. I never understood any one on this side of the House to say that the separate schools which existed under the dual system put into force by the Northwest Territories was not a denominational school.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I mean the separate schools that are there to-day.

Mr. BELCOURT. So far as I understand it, the schools existing in the Territories under the Act of 1875 and the ordinance of 1884 were, to all intents and purposes, denominational schools.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Does the hon. gentleman take the ground that the separate schools in the Northwest to-day under the present schools in the Northwest Territories, at all times denominational schools.

Mr. BELCOURT. No, I do not, I did not say that.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I think the hon. gentleman said that you could not have separate schools which were not denominational.

Mr. BELCOURT. I said that the separate schools of Canada, whether in the east or the west, the north or the south, have been, perhaps with the exception of the present schools in the Northwest Territories, at all times denominational schools.

Mr. FOSTER. In Quebec are the Protestant schools which are separate schools denominational schools?

Mr. BELCOURT. I do not know what they are de facto, but they are de jure. They can be made denominational schools to all intents and purposes under the law.

Mr. FOSTER. According to the argument of my hon. friend it is the de facto and not the de jure that ought to rule. My difficulty is that you have a Protestant school, a minority school; I suppose it does not often happen that that minority school is not made up of different denominations of Protestants. If you have Baptists and Presbyterians and Methodists, making up the minority forming a school that is a separate Protestant school, how are you going to make that a denominational school? Because the tenets of these three denominations are different. You could not teach the Presbyterian catechism because the Methodists do not like it.

Mr. BELCOURT. As far as I understand the legislation of this country, whether it has been Dominion or provincial legislation, denominational schools have been confined to two classes of His Majesty's subjects, that is the Protestants on the one hand and the Catholics on the other. That is the only distinction, that is the only division or separation which any of our laws has ever contemplated and I say when the Confederation Act of 1867 was framed it was—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. That may be very true, but still would not what has just been suggested by the hon. member for North Toronto prevent the Protestant schools from being denominational in the sense which the hon. gentleman has mentioned?

Mr. BELCOURT. No, I do not think so, because the words 'denominational schools' is used in a general sense as far as Protestants are concerned. My hon. friend must admit that the expression 'denominational schools' was a distinction between Protestant and Catholic schools, exclusively, and I say all through our legislation they have been treated as such. Nobody has ever thought in speaking of denominational schools of attempting to give the Mormons, the Doukhobors, the Galicians or any other sect, separate schools, it has always been a separation as between Protestants and Catholics only.