

men expressed their assent to the establishment of that system of schools, it was with the idea that if once established it was to be continued. Therefore I submit that there rests on this country a moral obligation to give to the minorities in those two provinces that system of schools under which they have existed in the Northwest Territories for the past thirty years, and it would be an unwarrantable repudiation for us not to grant that which they have had for the past thirty years, and for which they now ask.

The task of building up a nation in British North America is no easy task. The diversity of race brought to us other diversities. To mould the constitution and our public policy along lines that will receive the recognition of these diversities is the task of every Canadian. The fathers of confederation recognized this difficulty, and the education issue was perhaps the gravest that confronted them. Their mode of settlement as applied to the provinces at that date is the method sought to be applied to-day to the new provinces. I have not the slightest doubt that it was the intention of the framers of the constitution that when these Territories should enter the confederation, the educational rights of the minorities should be protected just as the educational rights of the minorities in the other provinces were protected by section 93 of the British North America Act; and any attempt to disturb this policy which has been lived up to in the past would, I believe, be disastrous to the country. This is the only way in which we can secure national contentment and national unity. Canada to-day is making such progress as to satisfy the aspirations of the most ambitious of us; and, as an hon. gentleman said the other day, we are simply at the morning star, at the cock-crowing, of our national existence, but any interference with those rights which have been established, and which are so dear to certain classes of our population would, I fear, seriously injure the country. To maintain our present position and develop further with the years to come internal calm is necessary. It would take little to disturb the unity of the Canadian spirit, and perhaps threaten the compact of confederation. It is our duty to face our conditions and build up our growing country on lines that will meet our conditions. It is due to our national integrity that we religiously adhere to the compacts and compromises made by the fathers of confederation—that we adhere to the legislative compact made with the Territories in 1875; and I believe, Sir, that the people of this country will approve of the clauses of the measure now before the House, which seek to preserve the rights granted to the minority in the Ter-

riorities in 1875. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I purpose giving to the measure my support.

Mr. A. N. WORTHINGTON (Sherbrooke). Mr. Speaker, since the commencement of the debate on the Bill which the right hon. the First Minister has brought before the House, I have listened to the speeches delivered on both sides, and have endeavoured to form an independent and unbiased opinion that would guide me in registering my vote when the time came for a division on this important question.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Bill contains many clauses relating to the distribution of lands, public moneys and educational matters, only one clause seems to have occupied the time of the House to any extent, and that is the educational clause. Whether due to a religious zeal or for other reasons, all other questions seem to pale before this one, and to such an extent that the man on the street speaks not of the Autonomy Bill but of the Separate School Bill. So many and so varied are the arguments brought forward by hon. members on either side of the House and so diametrically opposed are the views expressed that a layman, of non-legal mind and attainments might well pause and wonder where we are at. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I think it would have been wiser and more in the interest of peace and harmony if the government had submitted this Bill to the highest legal authorities before presenting it to the House. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition, in his amendment to the second reading of the Bill, laid down the principle that upon the creation of a province in the Northwest:

The legislature of each province, subject to and in accordance with the provisions of the British North America Acts of 1867 and 1886, is entitled to and should enjoy full powers of self-government, including the power to exclusively make laws in relation to education.

By this amendment the question in issue is simply whether or not by an Act of the federal parliament the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta shall be restricted in their freedom to deal with the question of education as they see fit. The amendment is in no sense an attack on separate schools, nor is it necessary, in order to oppose it, to defend separate schools; if the issue raised in the amendment was rigidly adhered to, the advantages or disadvantages of separate schools need not be mentioned. The issue raised is simply a constitutional one and not a sectarian one. The limitation in power in what the British North America Act says is a matter exclusively within provincial control, is what the amendment condemns, and a strict regard for the constitution should