

will and of harmony. The development and settlement of these immense prairies demands the adoption of some such policy. In fact, it is the very argument which was brought forward in 1875 in support of that clause in the Northwest Territories Act. When the Bill was introduced in the House the Hon. Mr. Blake spoke as follows :

He (Mr. Blake) believed that it was essential to our obtaining a large immigration to the Northwest that we should tell the people beforehand what those rights were to be in the country in which we invited them to settle. It was interesting to the people to know that at the very earliest moment there was a sufficient aggregate of population within a reasonable distance, that aggregation would have a voice in the self-government of the Territories, and he believed the Dominion government was wise (although the measure might be brought down very late this session, and it might be found impossible to give it due consideration) in determining in advance of settlement what the character of the institutions of the country should be in which we invite people.

The 'Nouveau Monde,' the organ of the Ultramontane section of the Conservative party in the province of Quebec, taunted the Mackenzie government for having prematurely organized the Northwest Territories. On January 20, 1876, the 'Globe' vindicated the action of the government, for the 'Globe' did not utter one word against the school legislation of 1875 :

The tide of immigration has already set in, and in order to prevent effectually those acts of lawlessness which characterize all new settlements where population precedes the establishment of authority, it was best for all parties that a settled government should be organized. It is inevitable that a greater and greater degree of self-government should be accorded to the people of the Northwest, and nothing shows more clearly the reactionary tendencies of the party whose organ 'Le Nouveau Monde' is than their illiberal position on this question.

Immigrants who have come since 1875, to settle in the Territories knew in advance what were the 'laws and what was the character of the institutions of the country' in which we invited them to settle. No one has settled there under false pretenses. Last summer, one of my constituents, a young well-to-do farmer, anxious of trying his luck in the Territories, came to me for advice, and I remember distinctly that he inquired about the school system in the Northwest. I advised him to go, gave him letters of introduction for the member from Alberta (Mr. Oliver) to-day Minister of the Interior, and for the member from Saskatchewan, to-day the hon. Senator Davis. He has taken up a farm there, but I am satisfied that he would not have gone at all, if he had not been in a position to give religious instruction to his children.

In such a delicate question as this, the hon. member for East Grey forgets that Catholics are bound to have religious instruction given to their children; he forgets that

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Catholics reject any system of education wherein a religious teaching different from theirs is given, or wherein no religious doctrine is taught. That view, after all, cannot be so objectionable since eminent writers and Protestant statesmen, such as Guizot, Jules Simon, Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, Chamberlain, Balfour, Sir John Macdonald, have stood up for denominational schools. I respect the views of the hon. member for East Grey, but for one who poses so much as an enemy of coercion, how is it that he is trying to coerce me into sending my children to schools which my conscience condemns?

When it comes to administering the oath, regard is had for the conscientious objections of the Quakers. They are not forced to take the oath; they are allowed to make, instead, a solemn declaration. Large sums of money have been voted towards assisting the Mennonites and Doukhobors to come to this country, when it is a well known fact that they will not take any part in the defence of the country, even in case of necessity. Such facts go to show that, at times, the House has taken into account the religious scruples of various denominations. It seems to me Catholics and French Canadians are entitled to as much consideration as Quakers, Mennonites and Doukhobors. In establishing a system of separate schools, we are ensuring to all minorities, whether Protestant or Catholic, the protection and regard to which they are entitled. In so doing, I believe we are keeping within the scope of the powers granted by the British North America Act of 1867.

I have no intention, for the purpose of proving my statement, to enter into a discussion of the constitutional features of the case, by a study and comparison of the clauses of the British North America Act. I shall be content to follow the practice of courts of justice—and this parliament is, indeed, the highest tribunal in the country—and quote, in support of my views, those of statesmen, jurists, &c., who have been always considered in this House, and rightly so, as thoroughly competent authorities on such matters.

Lord Kimberly in moving in the House of Lords, on May 23, 1871, the second reading of the Bill amending the British North America Act, and under which we are to-day granting a constitution to these two new provinces, spoke in the following terms :

The Bill was intended to remove doubts which had been cast on the validity of certain Acts of the Canadian parliament. The Act of confederation of the North American provinces gave power to the parliament of Canada to establish provinces in territories admitted, or hereafter to be admitted into the Dominion of Canada, and to provide for the representation of such provinces in parliament, but an Order in Council was necessary, and prior to the issue of such an order in July last the Canadian parliament passed two Acts providing for the temporary government of Rupert's Land and