

let me say this, and I will sum up my argument by referring to a question put me two or three times by my hon. friend opposite. He said:—If you agree to maintain the present school system, such as it is in the Territories, what of the French language? By an Act passed in 1876 or 1877 the French language was imposed upon the Territories. That was an Act passed by Mr. Mackenzie, but by an Act passed by Sir John Macdonald in 1890 the restriction put upon the legislature by the former Act was removed. Therefore, so far as the question of language is concerned, the Territories enjoy provincial autonomy. The power of the local legislature being unrestricted with regard to language, why should it not, I am asked, be unrestricted with regard to schools. My answer is simply this. There is a provision in the British North America Act guaranteeing separate schools, and there is no such provision with regard to the French language. And speaking here, as a member of the minority in this country, I would make a strong appeal to my fellow countrymen of the same race and language to stand by the constitution and to ask nothing which is not to be found within its four corners.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Hear, hear.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not want to have any privileges which are not granted any other class of subjects, but only the privileges and rights which are given in the British North America Act. On this ground I appeal to all Liberals from all the provinces, whether from the centre or from the extremities, whether from Ontario or Quebec, whether from the west or the maritime provinces, to show that we are a united party.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. To show and prove that we have but one policy for all the provinces and that we do not claim for one province one thing and another thing for another province, but that in all things we should realize that to carry on the government of this country, and in building up a nation, we must be prepared to make sacrifices, we must be prepared to give up something even of our legitimate pretensions, we must show both by precept and example, that we are for Canada first, Canada last, Canada forever.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has referred to me as not speaking for the whole Conservative party in my address on the second reading of this Bill. The somewhat impassioned appeal with which he has just closed his speech indicates that he is not very sure for whom he himself is now speaking. I may further remind the hon. gentleman that if I kept within bounds in my

speech on the second reading of the Bill, I cannot congratulate him upon doing the same in his speech on the first reading. For, in that speech he spoke as if for his whole party. Well, certainly so far as the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) is concerned, he did not speak for him. And, if rumour is to be trusted he did not speak for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), though, since then, that hon. gentleman has come back to the fold and is prepared to support a position in absolute contradiction to that which he took in 1896. Now, I do not want to make this debate very long. But the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) must have found himself in straits, when, after two months' debate on this subject he has found it necessary to speak for an hour without saying anything that has not been said a number of times before. I think there is nothing in his present speech which he himself has not said before. And some things he has said now for the third time—I think I have heard the right hon. gentleman four times give the historical account of the conference in Great Britain.

The right hon. gentleman has said there is no such thing as absolute provincial rights in matters of education because there are certain qualifications in section 93 of the British North America Act, which he himself admits to be the sole clause governing the distribution of powers as between the Dominion and the provinces in regard to education. Suppose that there is not absolute power in the provinces, is that a reason why he should seek to invade, as he does by this legislation, those provincial powers as they are? Suppose that a man has the lease of a farm for ninety-nine years. That is not an absolute title, as the right hon. gentleman, being a lawyer, knows. But does that justify any one in going in and breaking down the man's fences and taking possession of a portion of his land. The provinces have certain powers conferred upon them by section 93, subject to certain qualifications. If the right hon. gentleman is true to the spirit of his speech of this afternoon, he will vote for the application of section 93 with nothing more and nothing less than that section contains. The right hon. gentleman declares that he desires that the constitution shall be applied. Yet he begins his speech by taking for granted that which it was necessary for him to prove in order to maintain his case. He declares that there is some constitutional necessity to be found somewhere—I know not where—that separate schools should be continued forever in the Northwest Territories of Canada, even when they are created into provinces. I would ask the right hon. gentleman whether it is outside section 93 of the British North America Act that he finds that constitutional provision, or is it contained in section 93?