

whole matter could be dealt with. There is a great difference of opinion as to the advisability of having any religion whatever in our schools. It is a difference in which people are thoroughly honest. Some take the view that we should have an absolutely secular school; others take the view that we should have a school in which there is some religious training. If we are to follow English precedent then we would accord to the minorities in this country the right to have religious training in our schools.

I do not want to go at any length into a discussion of the ordinances of the Northwest Territories but I shall summarize as briefly as I can the provisions of the present law as I understand it. As I understand these ordinances—I may be in error—there is to be one normal school with uniform normal training for all teachers,—and when I say all teachers I mean teachers of all schools, separate and public—a uniform curriculum and course of study for all schools of the same grade; uniform text books for all schools whatever; uniform qualifications of teachers for all schools whatever; complete and absolute control of all schools as to their government and conduct by the central school authority set up by the legislature under the ordinances; complete secularization of all schools between nine o'clock in the morning and half-past three in the afternoon. Then there is a provision for religious instruction from half-past three p.m. to four o'clock, and there is a provision that where there is a public school, the minority, Protestant or Roman Catholic, may organize a separate school, but every separate school is subject absolutely to all the foregoing conditions and is in every sense of the term a public school. I think I am right in saying that the meaning of the amended Bill, is: that the province shall have exclusive jurisdiction in regard to education but the province cannot deprive the minority of the right to this religious instruction from half-past three in the afternoon until four o'clock. Now, Sir, we are going to have in that country, in the first place, a national school; a school in which as these ordinances provide there should be only one language, the English language, except in regard to an elementary class in French. These schools in the Northwest Territories are therefore more truly national schools than the schools in the province of Manitoba, because we find in the Manitoba School Act a provision for bilingual schools similar to the provisions we have in Ontario, and there is no provision of that sort in the Northwest Territories ordinances. It would then appear that the whole objection centres down to the question of this one half hour of religious instruction, and, there seems to be a great difference of opinion as to that. A great deal has been said in regard to the school system of the United States. In that country they have national public schools, but

side by side with these schools have grown up schools in which the different religious denominations are teaching religion, largely at their own expense, and we know that there are many strong men in the United States whose opinion is against the advisability of maintaining schools devoid of all religious teaching. For example, Dr. Lyman Abbott writing in his newspaper, one of the strongest Protestant journals published in the United States, says:

We have insisted that the Roman Catholic critics are largely right in saying that our present school system is irreligious, and that an irreligious school is fatally defective. We have maintained that life cannot be done up in two separate parcels, one labelled secular and the other religious, and dealt out at different shops; that education is worthless, if not worse than worthless, if it does not involve the impartation of the religious life; that the development of faith, love, reverence, conscience must be carried on with the development of perception, imagination, intellect; that to develop the latter and leave the former dwarfed and stunted is a process not deserving the name of education and will neither fit the pupils for life nor secure prosperity nor even safety for the republic.

That is the opinion of one eminent Protestant in the United States with regard to that question. In the same way I might quote at great length the opinions of distinguished English statesmen in favour of religious teaching in the schools in Great Britain, where the minorities enjoy full liberty in educational matters. I might quote from speeches made by Mr. Balfour in 1902; I might quote from speeches made by the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain: I might quote from speeches made by other eminent British statesmen, all expressing the belief that there should be religious teaching in the schools.

The whole question before us narrows itself down to this—apart from the constitutional question on which I will say a word later—the whole question at issue before us is: are the people of the Northwest Territories to be permitted to have any religious instruction in their schools? I might safely say that there is a very large and respectable body amongst our community who insist that there shall be religious instruction in our schools, and there is also a large proportion of our population who demand absolutely national schools without religious teaching. On this point let me quote from an address delivered by the Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land before the Anglican Synod, in which he says:

If separate schools are aided by the state, I think the state should have the same securities for a sound secular education as in its other schools, although there are separate schools in England there is only one council of education. There are common qualifications for all teachers; there is one system of inspection and one body of inspectors. There is one course of education.