

prejudice the rights of the minority in respect of their special denominational schools. Then, Sir, we had a series of questions submitted by the government of that day to the courts to determine that contention. Those questions were determined in the affirmative. This brings us down to the period of 1896, and it seems to me that the history of this legislation, the history of this litigation, the history of this unpleasant agitation in this country in connection with that legislation and litigation, furnishes us with both a lesson and a warning. It furnishes to the majority a lesson of conciliation and concession, and to the minority a lesson of warning against asserting too strongly and too determinedly their scruples or their rights in a country composed such as ours is of two races and different creeds.

We come now to the Northwest Territories, with which we have more immediately to deal, and I find in 1875 there was a consolidation of the laws affecting that country. Chapter 49, 38 Victoria, section 11 introduces into that country, the same principle of separate schools as we find provided for in the British North America Act and as we find existing in other provinces. This legislation was enacted, when Roman Catholics and Protestants in the Territories were probably about equal in number. Certainly it was adopted by this parliament almost without dissent, or objection, or question. It was accepted by the people of the Northwest loyally and lived up to with certain modifications—modifications possibly in the direction of minimizing the rights of the minority down to the present day. It substantially existed for thirty years and was lived up to by the people of the Northwest loyally and accepted by them harmoniously. This brings me to a stage in my address, where I desire to make my remarks as brief as possible, and where I feel compelled to refer more especially to the system of education which prevails in the Northwest Territories. We have had it described by two gentlemen who have addressed the House, one on either side; and from the best examination I can make of that system in the ordinances of the Territories and from the reports of the superintendent of education for the Northwest Territories for the years, 1901-2-3, I think I can safely rely on the description given by the hon. the Finance Minister and the hon. member for St. Ann's division of Montreal.

For the sake of putting myself on record and to make myself clear, I will take the liberty of reading from the speech of the Finance Minister a citation describing the educational system prevailing in the Northwest; and his description agrees with what I find to be the case myself from an examination of the subject. He says:

What then are the essential elements of national schools? I take it for granted that if you have a school which is established

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by the public authorities, if the management of the school derives all its authority and privileges from a regulation of the government of the state, if you have a system of schools under which the proper authorities of the state, or the province, or territory as the case may be, themselves specify the school books, establish the course of study, provide for the inspection of the schools and for the distribution of the money, if you have all those elements, then I say you have a system of state-created, state-managed and state-supported public schools. Every one of these conditions exists to-day in the public school system of the Northwest Territories. A member of the government of the Territories becomes commissioner of education and the powers of the commissioner are set forth in detail. I shall only read the clause under the heading of 'Regulations of the Department.' These regulations are to be made by the commissioner himself, a member of the government, with the approval of the Governor in Council. Section 6 of chapter 29 says:

The commissioner, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, shall have power :

1. To make regulations of the department—  
(a) For the classification, organization, government, examination and inspection of all schools hereinbefore mentioned;

(b) For the construction, furnishing and care of school buildings and the arrangement of school premises;

(c) For the examination licensing and grading of teachers and for the examination of persons who may desire to enter professions or who may wish certificates of having completed courses of study in any school;

(d) For a teacher's reading course and teachers' institutes and conventions;

2. To authorize text and reference books for the use of the pupils and teachers in all schools hereinbefore mentioned as well as such maps, globes, charts and other apparatus or equipment as may be required for giving proper instruction in such schools;

3. To prepare a list of books suitable for school libraries and to make regulations for the management of such libraries.

4. To make due provision for the training of teachers.

What is there, Sir, in all this to which anybody can take exception? These details constitute the essential elements of a national school system. That system prevails to-day in the Northwest Territories, and that system we propose to continue by the legislation which we have presented in this House. Well, there is still a shadow of difference. The difference between a minority school and a majority school in the Northwest Territories is so exceedingly small that he who would attempt to make a definition of it would find himself in difficulty. The difference is with respect to one half hour's instruction in religious matters at the close of the school. The school laws of the Northwest Territories provide for religious instruction, not as a matter of obligation, but they empower the trustees to authorize religious instruction within a certain limit. That authority for religious instruction is not confined to separate schools, it applies to all schools in the Territories. It is provided that wherever the trustees so wish, wherever the