

Now, Sir, is not that absolutely the system that is being provided for in the Northwest Territories—common qualification for all teachers, one system of instruction, the same course of education. Further on in his address his Lordship the Anglican Bishop says :

That whilst we desire to secure for the children in the public elementary schools the best and most thorough instruction in secular subjects suitable to their years and in harmony with the requirements of their future life, we are also unanimously of opinion that their religious and moral training is a matter of still higher importance alike to the children, the parents and the nation.

I quote the following extract from a lecture delivered by the Reverend J. N. King, D.D., of the city of Winnipeg, principal, I think, of the Presbyterian College there. Dr. King says :

The restriction of the school to purely secular instruction with relegation of religious instruction and even moral on its religious side, to the home and the church, gives no security that the latter will be supplied at all in many cases.

I quote from a letter to the 'Sun' by the Reverend Principal Grant, since deceased, November 16, 1889 :

But it may be asked : What would you do in the case of a possibly compact dissension minority like Protestants in Quebec or Roman Catholics in Ontario or Manitoba ? It seems to me that the Ontario Separate School Law in its original form might be taken as the basis of a compromise in such cases. It enacts that those who desire to establish separate schools may do so where they are strong enough to support them. The trustee elections for such must be the same as for public schools, the teachers must be duly certified, the regular text books on ordinary subjects must be used and there must be public inspection and a conscience clause.

That is the statement made by the Reverend Dr. Grant in 1889, shortly before the Public School Act was passed in the province of Manitoba. Let me quote the following short statement from the report of Mr. Fitch, one of Her Majesty's chief inspectors of schools who was commissioned by the British government to report on the school system of America and France. Mr. Fitch arrived at this conclusion :

Where the state system absolutely excludes religious instruction from its purview, there grows up side by side with it a rival system outside of the national school organization, and in part hostile to it, administered by religious bodies, maintained at their own cost and that of the parents, receiving neither aid nor supervision from the public authorities. Experience seems to prove that in such circumstances the number of voluntary and denominational schools tends to increase, and the separation in feeling and interests between such schools and the common schools more marked, while the area of the state's influence over public education becomes pro tanto restricted.

Mr. PRINGLE.

This is his inference from his observation :

A secular system pure and simple, it would appear is incapable of becoming a truly national system.

That is just what is growing up in the provinces of this Dominion in which there is no provision for religious instruction. We have heard from the Minister of Finance that in Nova Scotia there are separate schools although they are not permitted by law. We also know that in New Brunswick there are schools supported by the Roman Catholics of that province. Is it not better that there should be a national system under one inspection, with a regular set of text books, and with teachers all of the same qualification; and then let the religious denominations, Protestant or Catholic, have religious instruction for half an hour from 3.30 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, if they see fit.

I did intend dealing at length with the law at present existing in the Northwest Territories, but I find that I have already occupied considerable time. I shall, therefore, only refer to it very briefly. Under section 11 of chapter 9 of the statutes of 1875, there is a provision regarding the schools of the minority, and this provision was repeated in the Consolidating Act of 1880. Then in 1884 there were ordinances passed providing for the organization of schools, and the law, while its main outlines remained for the most part, was amended from time to time, Consolidating Acts being passed, I think, in 1885 and 1887. It was not, I think, until 1892 that there was a complete change made in the school system. That change was so complete that the minority in the Northwest Territory considered that they had a grievance and appealed to the Governor in Council for redress. Let me just quote here the statement of Mr. Forget. He says :

Until the date of the ordinance of 1892 we had never been denied the right to administer our schools, to regulate the programme of studies, to choose the text books, to control religious instruction and authorize the use of the French language whenever thought convenient. These rights were exercised by the Catholic section of the board of education, and strictly speaking they were sufficient to preserve to our schools the distinctive character of Catholic schools.

This is what was said by Mr. Forget, now Lieutenant Governor of the Territories, and, at that time, one of the members of the Catholic Board of Education. He further said :

Now all this has disappeared. The board of education no longer exists nor its section. All the schools, public and separate, Protestant and Catholic, are placed by the ordinance of 1892 under the direct control of a Protestant superintendent of education and of a council of public instruction.