

yond certain areas and certain individuals. Now, an expression has been used in this debate which is very appropriate, namely, the opinion of the man on the street; I think that phrase was introduced by the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), and I say that the man on the street looks upon this question which we are discussing here to-day in precisely the same light as the question which was discussed in 1896 was looked upon at that time—as a vexed question which should be kept out of Dominion politics, if possible. I am going to point out why the public are aroused in the province of Ontario and why they are justified in the stand they take. Some hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House have tried to minimize that agitation and to show that there is no public feeling on the subject; but I believe I shall better be able to retain the respect of my fellow members from other provinces by stating the exact position of the case rather than by attempting to minimize the facts. In 1895 the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) stumped in the province of Ontario on the Manitoba issue. The Remedial Bill was referred to, but the discussion at that time resolved itself into one on the principle of separate schools in the province of Manitoba. The hon. member for Brandon came into federal politics and became a cabinet minister upon that question and upon no other. His views were known to the public and to his colleagues, and he took strong ground upon the question in the various speeches he made. The people of the province of Ontario believed at that time that the premier shared the views expressed by him in the county of Haldimand and other places where he spoke. The people of the province of Ontario and the people of other parts of this country—and I am borne out in this statement by what the ex-Minister of the Interior said in this House a few days ago—believed that the present Prime Minister prevented separate schools as they existed from being forced on Manitoba in 1896; they believed that he was the champion of those who were against separate schools in Manitoba. The ex-Minister of the Interior said in his speech that the Prime Minister stood in the way of those who wanted to force separate schools on that province in 1896. In the course of one of his speeches in Haldimand in 1895—and this sentiment will be found running through many of his speeches—the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) said:

We have a very large territory; our country is a country of magnificent distances; we have unfortunately pursued a policy in regard to land, and I am not here to discuss or criticise that at the present time, but there is a good deal of land that is not occupied by actual settlers, and the people are not as close together as they should be for the purposes of social life. The country is sparsely settled as a rule. When you get out into the country which is sparsely settled, there is the diffi-

culty of getting enough families together to form a school district. In order to make the system efficient, we have settled the policy that we should not have the school district more than four or five miles square. Supposing that you find in a sparsely settled district enough families to make a school, with eight or ten children able to go to that school, and suppose three or four are Roman Catholics, under the old system they were exempt from taxation, they would have nothing to do with the formation of a public school district, and the result was that in many of these places, although there were enough people, Protestant and Catholic, the result of the division of the people was that you could not get a school district.

That was the position the hon. member for Brandon took before the people of this country in 1895 and 1896. The same principle is involved in the present discussion with respect to the sparsely settled districts of the Northwest; and I think I shall be able a little later on to show the inconsistency of the hon. member in the position he has taken on this question. This statement of the hon. member for Brandon was a proof that the Prime Minister was in entire sympathy with the doctrine he then laid down because he was taken into the Prime Minister's cabinet and no effort has since been attempted to force separate schools upon Manitoba. But, Sir, there were other incidents to prove the same thing. I can remember the occasion of a great public meeting in Toronto, on February 24, 1896. It was open to any one who might wish to attend for the purpose of discussing the Manitoba school issue. It was a non-partisan meeting. The chair was occupied by our late lamented friend Mr. E. F. Clarke, the late member for Centre Toronto. There were both Conservatives and Liberals present. Mr. Dalton McCarthy received an invitation to attend, and did attend; Mr. Joseph Martin received an invitation, and did attend. The present Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock) received an invitation and attended the meeting, and on rising to speak he told the people that he had come there after discussing the matter with his leader, Mr. Laurier. Mr. Dalton McCarthy, on rising to speak, said:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I do not know very well how I am to introduce myself to you this evening, for, unlike my friend, Mr. Mulock, I had not any leader to consult before I came before you.

The present Postmaster General then took a position directly opposed to the position which he now takes on this question, and that is one of the reasons why the people of Ontario are aroused over this question. The present Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock), on that occasion moved this resolution

Resolved, that the jurisdiction of the Dominion parliament in educational matters is exceptional, and while we may not be united as to whether such jurisdiction ought to exist, we