

The right hon. gentleman appealed to his record dealing with these troublesome questions, and pleaded that he had given sufficient evidence of his desire to conciliate and treat the various elements and creeds in this country upon lines that are broad, national and humane. He referred to his refusal to interfere in the New Brunswick agitation with regard to separate schools and gave that as an evidence of the spirit of fairness and toleration which actuates him. In the first speech he made on this measure he also referred to that matter, and drew attention to the fact that he had then advocated non-interference with the rights of the province. Well, it struck me at the time that if that be the record of the right hon. gentleman, it is a great pity he did not embody the spirit which then actuated him into the measure now before parliament, because, if I understand the English language, this measure is above all things an interference with provincial rights. The right hon. gentleman told us that he refused to interfere in the agitation over the Jesuits Estate Bill because it was the undoubted right of the province to pass that Bill. Let me say that the Jesuits Estate Bill was my first experience in parliamentary life with one of these vexed questions, and I agreed with the right hon. the First Minister that as it was dealing with lands belonging to the province, which in my judgment the province had a perfect right to sell and do what it liked with the proceeds, consequently we as a federal parliament had no right to interfere. I held that it was a Bill dealing with education, which under the British North America Act came within the exclusive right of the province; and therefore if the province chooses to sell those lands and use the proceeds for educational purposes, or throw them into the sea, we had no right to interfere. Therefore although the question excited a great deal of feeling in my section of the country, I stood by that principle as firmly as I stand by it to-day, and I did it believing that the only guarantee for the successful working out of confederation lay in giving the provinces all the rights conferred on them by the constitution, and only exercising here those rights which belong to the federal parliament. Then we had the right hon. gentleman boasting that on the question of the Manitoba school education he had stood by provincial rights and endeavoured by conciliatory methods to adjust the differences between the two classes of people in that province and finally succeeded. Well, Mr. Speaker, I was with the First Minister on that question as well. I took the same grounds that I did on the Jesuits Estate question, namely, that it was undoubtedly the right of the province to deal with education, and I opposed any proposal to coerce or force Manitoba at that time. Was I right then? I submit that I was consistent in the stand I took upon those two questions, which were at the very antipodes

of each other, so far as popularity in my riding was concerned. Am I then to be blamed if I take the same ground to-day? Am I to be blamed if I take my stand to-day on the question of provincial rights in the matter before the House as firmly as I did on the Jesuits Estate Bill and the Remedial Bill, which sought to compel the province of Manitoba to do what I thought she had a perfect right to refuse to do? Then, I say, I am consistent with my record in every particular. But the First Minister is not consistent with his record. On other occasions he stood by provincial rights; to-day he is abandoning the principle of provincial rights and forcing upon these unwilling provinces laws which compel them to do what the constitution never intended they should be compelled to do. The right hon. gentleman defends his conduct by saying: I am doing this in obedience to the constitution. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) said last night that he did not understand the Prime Minister to say that he was compelled by the constitution to take the course he does. But I have here the Prime Minister's very words:

I stand again, as I believe, upon the rock of the constitution of Canada when I say that this parliament should, according to that constitution, give to the minority in the new provinces the same rights and privileges that are given to the minorities in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

This is as plain a declaration as could be made that he is obliged by the constitution to do what he is doing—that he must take the course he does or otherwise he will not be doing right. I leave the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to settle this difference between themselves. But I take the declaration of the Prime Minister. I understand his reasoning to be that, as section 93 of the British North America Act provides that certain rights enjoyed before confederation must be continued after coming into the union, he feels compelled to take the course he does. He says, if I understand him correctly. The Northwest Territories have a form of government, and under that form they have established separate schools; and, now that we are establishing the provinces by these Autonomy Bills, we must provide for the perpetuation of the separate school privilege.

Now section 93 provides:

In and for each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education.

But the section further provides:

Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law in the province at the union.

So, the Prime Minister argues that, because they have denominational schools by law in the Northwest Territories at this