

matter not of curiosity, but of right, that both this House and the country should know why this was and what it meant. Now, let me say a word or two with reference to the changed methods of my right hon. friend. Take, for instance, the British North America Act. The clauses in it with reference to education were framed to do what? To give legal effect to an agreement between thoroughly constituted bodies who under that agreement went into the pact of confederation. Each had a House with elected representatives from the people enjoying all the powers of a representative assembly. Those provinces came together as independent constituents, and they did not attempt legislation until they had made their agreement and asked that it be embodied in an enactment. Come to the case of the Manitoba Act. In Manitoba there was no representative body such as an assembly; but how carefully the men of that time were minded to consult the constituent elements of that northwest country. Delegates were sent; the men were assembled; their views were got; the views were sent here; the views were communicated to the British government, and it was upon that tacit agreement or real agreement as to the wants and wishes of the constituent elements of Manitoba that the legislation was based which became fixed in law. How different has been the action of the right hon. gentleman in this matter. Whom has he consulted? Why, I think it is stated in his own speech that there were some reasons why he should not have granted autonomy two years ago or one year ago, and what are the reasons he gave?

That as we were on the eve of a general election, the time and occasion would be more propitious and more fitting after the general election when the Territories would have the benefit on this floor of a larger representation. These views were generally accepted. The elections have taken place and immediately after the elections, or as soon as was practicable thereafter, we invited the executive of the Northwest Territories to send delegates here to confer with us upon the measure which was to be introduced so as to admit them into the confederation. We have had the benefit of the presence of Mr. Haultain, the premier of the Northwest Territories, and Mr. Bulyea, one of his colleagues, and we have had the advantage of several conferences with them. We have had the advantage also of the presence and advice of several of the members from the Territories.

Now, in profession, what does this mean? It means that before this Bill was agreed upon and given to the House, the right hon. gentleman wanted to have all the representative opinion he could possibly get from the west. Did he consult it? There are 500,000 people living in those two provinces, according to the statement of my right hon. friend. Is it on record

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that he consulted those people before introducing this Bill? There were a certain number of old and new representatives from the Northwest present in this House. Did the right hon. gentleman consult them with reference to this clause? If he did, did they approve of this clause? If they did approve of it, why all this bother since? Why has the right hon. gentleman been held up? The right hon. gentleman also had an accredited representative of that Northwest country in the person of the Minister of the Interior, a gentleman who had travelled the west, who knew the west, who, before and from his first entry into this parliament had taken a very deep interest in this very subject. Did my right hon. friend consult him? If so, how comes it that in a race for time, after he had beaten his Minister of the Interior by a few hours, that minister rose in his place in parliament and said to his chief: I never saw that clause until I read it after I came here? Yet if there was any note in the right hon. gentleman's voice in 1895 and 1896, it was this. He will find it embalmed in 'Hansard,' in the pages of his press, in the hearts of his admirers, in quotations everywhere. What was it? Translated into a few English words, it was this and nothing more: I want my people in Manitoba to have separate schools, but I want them to have those schools by the voice of Manitoba itself. I desire to see these privileges retained for them, but I desire still more not to violate provincial rights. That was his note. There was none more dominant. How has he changed? To-day he is an autocrat. To-day he rushes the Bill. To-day he rushes the members of his cabinet, the representatives from the Northwest, and the representative council from the Northwest for he has not been able to state that he did confer with that council—a representative body if there ever was any—and that it ever gave its assent to this clause. In all these cases the old spirit has departed, the old method has been laid aside, and to-day we have in their stead the work of the autocrat, caring nothing for his Minister of the Interior, caring nothing for his Minister of Finance, caring nothing for the representatives from the west, caring nothing and consulting in no way the 500,000 people for whom we are legislating. That is a change to which I call the attention of this House.

There is another peculiar circumstance in this connection. On the introduction of a Bill, the usual method followed is simply to explain it, but when my right hon. friend was taxed with going beyond an explanation, he defended himself by saying that he did give and only intended to give what was a full explanation of the Bill. What is the purpose of having a Bill explained, especially an important Bill of this kind, on its introduction? It is that the House and the country may become seized with its sa-