

with the welfare of those Territories. I observe that on this particular occasion the leader of the opposition, in conducting the debate, if he has control of its conduct, is apparently of the view of that great American humorist, Mark Twain, who declared the less he knew of the subject the more fluently he could speak on it. I notice that his colleagues sitting beside him, members of a government who themselves, not so many years ago, were painfully interested in a certain school question, have not so far replied to the three ministers of the cabinet who have dealt with the question in this debate. The duty of replying to one of the most important speeches that has been made on this occasion has been relegated to my hon. friend who has just sat down (Mr. Northrup), and I think all will agree with me that no serious light has been thrown upon the subject, that the speech has not done credit either to the cause or its leader, nor has it done discredit to the ex-Minister of the Interior or to the cause which he champions. It seems to be the strong point in the argument of these gentlemen that because they do not see fit to see something, that, therefore, it is not there. Now, there is no one so blind as he who will not see; and the gentleman who can see no difference between the provisions of clause 16 as originally introduced and the provisions as they now stand for the approval of the House, is certainly very blind; I won't say that it is because he does not want to see, very probably it is because he cannot see. The difference between these two provisions, as I understand them, is radical. I do not say that it was intentional. We have had enough disputations in regard to constitutional points in this House during this debate to leave us all with the full knowledge that there may be honest differences of opinion with regard to all these points. To my mind the difference is very important. As stated by the ex-Minister of the Interior here to-day—and I speak as one who knows something of this matter, as one who has had experience in regard to school legislation, as one of those members of the Northwest Assembly who made the change in the Northwest school law between what it was before 1891 and what it is to-day—I say the difference, as I understand it, is a difference between clerical control of schools and national control of schools. If that is not a sufficient difference, then I do not understand what we are disputing about. I think it is a radical difference. It is what threw this country into a turmoil in 1896 and caused a change of government at that time. It is the reason why those gentlemen are sitting on that side of the House instead of on this side.

But I wish particularly to deal at this time rather with the financial terms of these Bills than with the educational sections. To revert again to the leader of the opposition and his troubles, it seemed to be a great

worry to him that two years ago several members representing the Northwest had the temerity to vote against his proposal for immediate provincial autonomy to the Northwest Territories. He objected very strongly to the reasons given on that occasion. I can only say that the reasons seemed to be sufficient to him at the time and afterwards, because, although he alleged that the measure was immediately important at that time it was the last reference he made to it, so far as I can recollect, until the measure was brought down this year. The reasons given were sufficient apparently to satisfy him that the question was not pressing, was not so immediately important. I think I can satisfy the House that there were very good reasons why members representing the Northwest Territories should not be anxious to accept the suggestion of provincial autonomy without knowing very well what the terms of that autonomy were to be. I think the events of this debate are sufficient to prove that; and I think what has occurred since the opening of this session and since these Bills were brought down is evidence, if evidence were needed, that western members have been fairly careful as to what they agreed to, and possibly have had some influence in securing provisions which would be to the advantage of the people of the Northwest Territories.

In considering the question of autonomy, we have to consider our peculiar position. We have to consider our position as compared with the condition of other provinces. The revenues that we might expect to receive as compared with those of other provinces, and consider whether our condition would be improved or be made worse by accepting provincial autonomy. We have great needs to meet in that country. Here in this province of Ontario we may make a comparison. The settled part of the province of Ontario is perhaps 400 miles long by 100 miles wide. In that area is contained all there is in Ontario, in the way of agriculture, at any rate. There are the roads, there are the schools, there are all the expenditures practically which the provincial government has to provide for. In these Northwest Territories, in the province of Saskatchewan, we will say, there is an area of 300 by 300 miles of agricultural country, over which agricultural settlement must spread, over which roads must be made, throughout which schools must be provided and municipal institutions taken care of. In Alberta we claim a distance of 800 miles in length by no less than 200 or 300 miles in width of agricultural country, over which settlement will spread, throughout which roads must be built, municipalities organized and schools maintained. If the province of Ontario, upon entering into confederation, found itself with a load of some \$45,000,000 of debt incurred because of the necessity for the improvement of the conditions throughout that comparatively small area, we might