

kind of an Education Act for the Territories we are giving our sanction to in this House, and I shall briefly contrast some of its provisions with those of the Nova Scotia School Law. In Nova Scotia we have what is known as a superintendent of education who is an officer of the government holding office for life or good conduct, but in the Northwest Territories they have a commissioner of education, who is a member of the government, responsible to the people, and who must go back for re-election. The Commissioner of Education in the Northwest Territories has full control of everything pertaining to education; he makes regulations as to the competency of the teachers for receiving a license; he controls their conduct after they are licensed; he supervises the manner in which they are engaged by the trustees; he drafts a form of contract which they must sign and they cannot teach school for one day without having complied with every regulation of the Act. Some hon. gentlemen have tried to make out that the separate school is absolutely apart from the public school, but I wish the message to be carried to our friends in Nova Scotia that this is an absolute mis-statement of the fact. The separate schools are national in every sense; they have the same text books, the same inspection and are under the same supervision as the common schools. From nine o'clock in the morning until half past three in the afternoon nothing can be taught in these schools except the ordinary prescribed lessons, but by arrangement between the trustees and the parents of the children in separate schools, there may be a half hour's religious instruction each day after half past three in the afternoon. I cannot see anything wrong about giving religious instruction in that manner; for my part I would like to see it the rule in every school in the country. Again, we are told by some hon. gentlemen, that once we pass this Act the school system in the Territories can never be changed, but section 52 of the School Act provides that if in any section there is a so-called separate school and a common school and the people wish to change they can unite and have the one common school. Therefore, the people can follow any school system they please, so long as they do not take away from the Roman Catholic or the Protestant minority the rights they have acquired. If the trustees of a Catholic and Protestant school in one section are willing to have a common school without any religious teaching in it, there is nothing in the Act to prevent it. I was pointing out, Mr. Speaker, that the rights in the matter of education which the minority of the new Territories will have under this legislation, are not as extensive as the rights given to the Protestant minority in Quebec or to the Roman Catholic minority in Ontario. And, in the province of Nova Scotia, although

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we have no separate schools by law, I can assure hon. gentlemen that the privileges which are allowed to separate schools and which are enjoyed by our Catholic friends in Nova Scotia are far and above anything which this law gives in the new provinces. If to-day, instead of forty years ago, we were framing a constitution for the admission of Nova Scotia into the confederation, I take the responsibility of saying that we could not form a compact without recognizing the claims of our Catholic friends in respect to this matter. Although there is no law dealing with it, I can assure the House that the Catholics of Nova Scotia are not suffering any grievance in respect to the educational laws of that province. If it is the right of the minority in Quebec to have a guarantee in the constitution, if it is the right of the minority in Ontario to have a similar guarantee, if it was the right of the minority in the Northwest Territories to have a guarantee in the Act of 1875, surely it is the right of that minority to have a like guarantee in the constitution to-day.

In 1867, when the province of Ontario came into confederation, the Catholics of Ontario came to the fathers of confederation with this section of the law in their hands:

Every separate school shall be entitled to a share in the funds annually granted by the legislature of this province for the support of common schools and shall be entitled also to a share in all other public grants, investments and allotments for public common school purposes now made or hereafter to be made by the province or the municipal authorities according to the average number of pupils attending such schools.

That is the law with which the Catholics of Ontario came to the fathers of confederation and said: Our rights must be recognized under that Act. And their rights were recognized under that Act. To-day, when we are making a new constitution, the Catholics—I suppose it is the Catholics who are asking for this now—come to us with a statute of this parliament and say: This is an Act which you put upon the statute-books by which our rights to separate schools were granted in 1875, thirty years ago; this has been revised and reviewed twenty times since and it has always been looked upon as a proper thing to put in that law, and now we ask you to recognize it as fully and as completely as a similar right was recognized in 1867, when the minorities of Quebec and of Ontario came to the fathers of confederation looking for the protection of their rights. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if it would be fair or just to say to people who have lived for thirty years under a statute which we have given them affording them protection, an Act passed in 1875, to now remove the protection which they have enjoyed constitutionally for thirty years. Some one was asked