

I would vote against the prayer of the petition, because I would think it was not right, and the people could turn me out when I sought re-election at their hands. That is the petition that so much has been said about, and I thought it wise to put that petition upon record. That is the petition that is called by the Postmaster General, one side of the question; a petition that asks separate schools to be established is called the other side of the question. Could anything be more unfair? There are no petitions coming from Orange lodges asking us to throttle the little province and prevent it from establishing separate schools. I call the attention of the statesmanlike Postmaster General—I will assume that he is a statesman, although he is self-appointed, self-adjusted and self-labelled as a statesman.

An hon. MEMBER. Union labelled.

Mr. LANCASTER. Well, perhaps not union labelled, and not so labelled by the people of Canada. The hon. gentleman who is so statesmanlike, the hon. gentleman who is at present running the Post Office Department of this country, undertakes to call that petition which I have read, one side of the separate school question; and a petition which asks this House to throttle a province is the other side of the separate school question. What would a gentleman from Quebec who advocates separate schools in the Northwest Territories, say if we attempted in this House, ten years or five years from now, supposing the country got incensed at Quebec butting in on these matters concerning the Northwest, supposing the country got aggravated, annoyed and disgusted, and say we will insist for a certain term in doing what the Finance Minister says is so deplorable, we will put some people in power who will settle this school question for ever in Quebec, just as these gentlemen want this government to settle the school question in the Northwest Territories, and we will abolish separate schools in the province of Quebec and Ontario. Now what would they say to that? In principle what is the difference? What is the difference between taking away a man's right and preventing him from exercising the right? In common sense, what is the difference between the two propositions? Am I doing a greater wrong if I go into a man's barnyard and steal his horse than if I said to him, although you have got a horse I will not allow you to use it, I will control it so that you shall never have the use of it? To be practical, what is the difference? He cannot use that which is his own in either case. He cannot deal with that which is his own, and which he has a right to deal with. There may be a difference in the way it may strike one man or another in the application, but on the moral principle—and we heard something even from the Postmaster General about

morals to-night—on the moral principle what is the difference between your saying to the province of Quebec; although you have yourselves established a right to your schools in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario; you shall not have them any longer, because we think it was a mistake when you established them—what would be the difference between saying that and saying to the Northwest provinces, you shall not exercise your right to declare whether you want separate schools or not, we will tie you up so that you shall never make a declaration either way? There is no difference in principle, no man can pretend there is.

Now I want to put on record the statements of some of the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite. In 1891 Sir Louis Davies spoke on this question of education in the Northwest Territories. That gentleman is now a judge of the Supreme Court. He was one of the gentlemen who came into power on the cry that we should not coerce Manitoba. This is what Sir Louis Davies said in 1891:

My opinion is now, and has been for years, that when that time comes (the time to erect the Territories into provinces) you cannot withhold from the provinces so erected the right to determine for themselves the question of education in one way or the other. I would be the last to favour this parliament imposing upon the people there any system of education, either free or separate. I only claim that when a Bill is introduced to erect those Territories into provinces that Bill should contain a provision enabling the people of the different provinces so created to decide what system of education they will have.

The Hon. David Mills, in the same year, spoke, not about separate schools in Quebec or Ontario, not about the British North America Act, but in regard to the Northwest Territories, the very part of this Dominion which this parliament is now dealing with. The Hon. David Mills was recognized as an authority on constitutional law by the Reformers of this country, and I think by a good many Conservatives. In fact, he was held up by hon. gentlemen opposite as the great constitutional model of this Dominion, and this is what he says:

When the people of the Territories, or any portion of the Territories, are sufficiently numerous to constitute a province—when, in fact, they attain their majority in regard to local matters and when they propose to set up for themselves—this parliament has no right to exercise control over them. It can give good advice, but it has no right to give commands.

When the Territories have a sufficient population to entitle them to become a province, they must decide for themselves whether they will have separate schools or not.

I have my view as to what will be the best decision for them to arrive at, but I must not impose on them my view as to how they should be governed after they have attained their majority.

Mr. LANCASTER.