

tors have ever read the speech delivered by the leader of the opposition, and possibly not one-hundredth of one per cent of them would understand it if they did read it. There is no disguising the fact that the issue in the country in reference to this measure is on the abstract question of separate versus national schools. It is a condition that confronts us and not a legal proposition, and I submit that the leader of the opposition should have adopted the course which most of his followers have pursued, and discussed the question on its merits. It is said that this matter should be left to the new provinces, and that in any case the provincial governments will treat the minority fairly. Well, there are some things upon which one man will not trust another, one race will not trust another, one religion will not trust another. In ordinary business transactions it is not considered shrewd to enter into a contract without reducing it to writing, and where religious or racial prejudices may surround a bargain, I submit that it is only right that people who are asking for protection should have protection guaranteed to them in some form or another. Many good reasons have developed why the minority in the Northwest Territories should not trust the provincial governments to do them justice. If the legal argument made by the leader of the opposition means anything, it means that the Territories came into confederation in 1870. He quoted the Barrett case, and from that he concluded that there was no system of separate schools in the Northwest Territories, and he therefore submits that section 93 of the British North America Act could not possibly apply to the new provinces, and that the minority there would have no legal standing whatever. We have some hon. gentlemen stating that the provinces, when established, would, if they had the opportunity, legislate against these separate schools. The hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Boyce), a few nights ago, criticising the administration for submitting this measure to a new parliament, said:

It was kept in the shade by the hon. gentlemen opposite until they had obtained a large and substantial majority in this House. The moment that majority is obtained, it is used for the purpose of passing through a measure to brand by coercive methods these Northwest provinces with a system of education which they do not desire.

I gather that this is an attack on the system of schools which the minority desire to establish there, and it is sufficient to lead the minority to think that there would be no protection or guarantee of their rights. I say further that the tone of the Conservative press in this country to-day, particularly in some of the provinces, justifies the minority in believing that their rights cannot be protected in any other way than by providing for them in this Act. Now, there is nothing unreasonable in the

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minority of a new province asking to have these rights provided for in the constitution. The province of Nova Scotia, when it entered confederation, was not satisfied to take the word of the fathers of confederation that the Intercolonial Railway would be built; it was provided for in the constitution. The province of British Columbia in the same way would not take the word of the Dominion government that the Canadian Pacific Railway would be built. The construction of that road was one of the conditions on which that province agreed to enter the confederation, and that condition was placed in the Order in Council bringing in that province. And there does seem to me, Mr. Speaker, no reason why there should be any agitation in this country over this issue, or why there should be any opposition to this measure. In fact, very few members who have spoken in this House have expressed any aversion to the separate schools as they exist in the Northwest. Not one single member coming from the Territories has spoken a word against them. In fact, I doubt if more than two members of the opposition altogether have spoken against the system of schools which they have. That being the case, there is not in my judgment any ground whatever for the apparent disturbance of public opinion which has recently existed upon this question.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this is a question of policy; and, if we read the history of this country, it will aid us in no small degree in reaching a proper conclusion in this case. The history of Canada is a history of compacts from the very beginning up to the present time. The beginning of Canadian history dates from the Treaty of Paris, when this country passed from French to British control. By that treaty the rights of the French and the rights of the Catholics were protected. The next compact was the Confederation Act, in which special provision was made for the protection of the minorities in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and particularly for the continuation and perpetuation of the school systems as they existed in those provinces. Provision was also made for the continuation of minority schools which might be established in any other province coming into the union, and for granting a remedy in case any provincial legislature interfered with any system of separate schools that had been established. In 1875, when the Northwest Territories were given a form of constitution, it was specially provided that the minority might under certain conditions establish separate schools. That proposition received the support at that time of men like George Brown, Alexander Mackenzie, Edward Blake and Sir John Macdonald; and I have not the slightest doubt that when these