

formed to deceive the Northwest Territories into the belief that the school question was settled and settled in the manner proclaimed from 1896 as the policy of the west; that is a free national school. I will not depend upon assertion for that. I will refer to the documents of the House and the testimony of a gentleman whom, I think, the government will not be in a position to question. In 1902 in this House we were discussing in committee the question of the grant to the Northwest Territories for the purposes of government and the Minister of the Interior was asked to make a statement in reference to the question of autonomy. Without referring to a great many of the statements that were made in connection with the discussion I may say that Mr. Boyd, then a member of this House, called the attention of the hon. gentleman to the question of public schools in a very pointed way. He said as recorded in 'Hansard' at page 3085.

The government might just as well admit that the delay is caused by the question of the schools, and the question of the language, and don't think for a moment that the people in the Northwest are not pretty well aware of that.

We have the challenge of Mr. Boyd, and I will read to you the reply of the Minister of the Interior at that time in reference to the position in which the schools stood. The minister said:

I think they will admit that rash haste with regard to a question of such vast importance—a question which must be satisfactorily settled if settled at all—rash haste would not at all be conducive to a settlement which would be satisfactory in the long run to the people of the Territories. I would not feel that I was taking an unreasonable position before this House if I said: that if the people of the Northwest Territories get a reasonable and satisfactory settlement, a settlement that the people of Canada and the people of the Territories particularly will regard as a good settlement; a fair and reasonable settlement promising permanency; promising lack of agitation, and difficulties and applications for reopening of the case in future years—if they get such a settlement within three or four years I should feel very well satisfied indeed, and I should feel that we have accomplished that result in a comparatively short time.

Then Mr. Sifton points out that we have a draft Bill furnished by Mr. Haultain, the provisions of which, he says, will require consideration; and, after discussing the financial aspect, the question of the lands and minerals, he comes to the school question, and he says:

I know of no political game that can be played, and so far as the separate schools are concerned, my own view is that the school question is settled so far as the Northwest Territories is concerned. I understand that the settlement at which they have arrived—and I am very happy to be able to express that opinion—is a satisfactory settlement, and that the Roman Catholic people on the one hand and

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the Protestant people on the other, feel that they have a satisfactory compromise, and that there is no necessity for difficulty or agitation upon the question.

The leader of the opposition especially refers to the statement of the Minister of the Interior, that the people of the Northwest had come to a satisfactory settlement of the school question and that there would be no possibility of any trouble in reference to that in the future, as the policy of provincial rights had been recognized, and says ('Hansard,' page 3113):

I am glad to know that my hon. friend regards the school question in that country as satisfactorily settled, and I trust it is so.

We therefore have the announcement of the Minister of the Interior that the people of the west had settled the school question, and that to the people of the west it would be left. We also had his statement—and in the light of after events it is rather interesting—that it would take three or four years' of negotiation, conferences and general consideration and one year's solid work, to determine the financial and other questions and clauses. That announcement is in strange contrast with the way this legislation was rushed down to the House this session after a few days' preparation, and in the absence of the Minister of the Interior himself. I submit that this was not accidental, but that the evidence shows that there was a desire to stifle an expression of opinion by the people of the west, and to prevent them presenting their case before the government of Canada. The draft Bill submitted by Mr. Haultain deals with financial questions and general constitutional questions alone, and there was an absolute omission from it of any reference to the school question. Did the government point out to him that there was this omission, and did they tell him that they were going to deal with the question themselves? Nothing of the kind. The right hon. gentleman did everything he possibly could to stave off public discussion, and through the Minister of the Interior announced that it would be a matter of conference and discussion between the two high contracting parties but when it came to the crux he stifled discussion. When the Prime Minister wrote to Mr. Haultain on the eve of last election, did he tell Mr. Haultain that he had changed his idea with regard to the school question, and that he intended to bring it into the arena of Dominion politics? Not a bit of it. On the contrary, he wrote to Mr. Haultain that he would have on the floor of parliament a larger number of representatives from the west, and that the other questions involved would be considered. The right hon. gentleman is very fond of boasting that he has a mandate from the people, but where is his mandate from the people on this question, a question which, above all others, requires that the voice of the elec-