

tion was only designed to preserve rights created by the people themselves in their independent legislatures before the union. It was a matter of compact. Legislative sovereignty had already established certain rights. These were not to be prejudiced after union had taken place.

In the case of the Northwest, however, the people had never acted. A system imposed upon them in 1875, which has continued from that time to the present, is now sought to be made perpetual. The people did not freely establish separate schools in the Northwest, but these were established under the terms of a statute in framing which the people had no voice, but to which as good loyal subjects they have been absolutely obedient so long as they were in a territorial position. The territories have never had any complete legislative powers such as were originally enjoyed by the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia. Parliament, as I have pointed out over and over again could have revoked the power conferred first upon the territorial council and afterwards upon the territorial legislature. The right hon. Prime Minister sought to overcome this by a misuse of words—I say that in no offensive sense. He said:

So, Sir, now whenever a province comes here knocking at this door asking to be admitted into confederation, if in that province there exists a system of separate schools, the British North America Act has provided that the same guarantee we give to the minority in Quebec and Ontario shall also be given to the minority in that province.

In this case no province comes here knocking at the door asking for admission into confederation. The government is proposing a measure to parliament under which provinces are created; but these will not be provinces until after this Act is passed and has gone into effect. It is of no use to attempt to dispose of high constitutional rights by any such juggling with words as that. The Prime Minister deals with the question as if the people themselves had established their own system of separate schools by their own independent, sovereign action. They have not done anything of the kind. They established separate schools in the Northwest because the Act passed in 1875, when there were not more than five hundred people in the Northwest, imposed upon them the duty of establishing separate schools if they should establish any schools at all. Again the Prime Minister says:

If we were in the year 1867, and not in the year 1905, and if we had to introduce into this Dominion the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan—

Mark the language: 'The provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan'—treating them

as if they were already sovereign entities. Why did he resort to what I, without desire to offend call a misuse of words? I will answer for him: It is because he was obliged to do so to give even a semblance of support to the measure which he introduced to the House on the 21st of February. Let me read again what I just now began to read:

If we were in the year 1867, and not in the year 1905, and if we had to introduce into this Dominion the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, would my hon. friend tell me that these provinces would not have the same rights and privileges in regard to separate schools as were granted to Ontario and Quebec?

Did any one ever hear a more absolutely unfounded premise and a more absolutely false conclusion? And it was cheered lustily by some of these hon. gentlemen who since have been going about in sackcloth and ashes because of their difficulties upon this question.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS.

THIRD READINGS.

Bill (No. 82) to incorporate the Dominion Annuity Company.—Mr. Bole.

Bill (No. 105) to incorporate the Ontario Fire Insurance Company.—Mr. Boyce.

THE OTTAWA ELECTRIC COMPANY.

House in Committee on Bill (No. 12) respecting the Ottawa Electric Company.

On the preamble,

Mr. ROBERT STEWART (Ottawa). Up to the present moment we have heard nothing from the promoter of the Bill as to the reasons why he asks this House to pass it. As one of the representatives of the city of Ottawa I would like to hear from him why he asks for this legislation, which, to my mind, is an invasion of the rights of the municipality. In such an important matter as this I really think that the promoter of the Bill ought to give us some reasons why he thinks we should pass it. I may say that since this Bill was in committee before a very numerous signed petition has been sent in protesting against the passing of the Bill, a petition signed by over 2,000 rate-payers of the city of Ottawa. I mention this as showing the very strong feeling that exists in the city against this Bill; and yet in face of this fact, and in face of the fact that this Bill seems to call for the abolition of the competition which exists to-day, we are still without any reasons given by the promoter of the Bill why it should pass.