

Thompson then made what I consider a solemn declaration, which I charge hon. gentlemen opposite with not living up to on this occasion.

I appealed to the House to continue the present system while the territorial system continued, and I declared that in my opinion the whole subject would be open and free to parliament as to what constitution we would give to the provinces when the provinces were created.

Now, Sir, I only remark in passing, that it is not a declaration. Let the constitution take its course; that is not a declaration that the constitution applies automatically. It is a declaration to this parliament, and to those men who were endeavouring to get rid of that clause to prevent any such argument being used as is now used. Keep quiet, be still, because when the time comes—as it has come now—you will be free to act as you see fit. Mr. McCarthy replied to him in these words:

I am very glad that the right hon. gentleman has explained it in that way, and perhaps I was wrong in my understanding of his remarks. Of course it is an important declaration from the First Minister. Now, the House will have to use its own judgment on this question. What I say is this: that if this question of separate schools is to remain in its present position until we grant provincial autonomy to any portion of the Northwest, it will be practically impossible, unless there is an enormous change in public opinion, to deny them what every other province that has joined the confederation has been entitled to, what Manitoba was entitled to, and what I submit under the circumstances every province would be entitled to. Now, let me draw attention to the constitution conferred upon Manitoba in that regard. I have not got it under my hand, but it will be found on consulting it that when we conferred autonomy upon the province of Manitoba we did it by reference to the British North America Act. What we declared was, that where not otherwise provided for in the Act, all the provisions of the British North America Act should apply to the province of Manitoba, and I think the very same words were contained in the resolutions which were passed at the time British Columbia and the province of Prince Edward Island came into the union. So that we have got that precedent before us; that was the promise upon which we admitted Manitoba, and looking at the character of the legislation, I do not think there can be any doubt that the same rule must apply when we admit the provinces to be created out of the Northwest Territories.

Now, Sir, what happened? There are many hon. gentlemen sitting opposite who were present on that occasion. The hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), I think, is the only gentleman in this House on that side who is consistent to-day. He said: You should not give them a chance, or let them have an argument that they can use for fastening separate schools on the new provinces under the constitution. But of course he might have justified himself in voting with the then premier by saying:

When the time comes we will be free—as the then premier said. But they were warned that when this time did come that would happen which is happening to-day. Again, what happened? The vote was taken, and 114 members to 21 maintained that clause on the statute-book, notwithstanding the warnings which were then given, and we are now face to face with the position that was then foreseen. Now, Sir, up to that point which brings us to 1894, there cannot be any cavilling, there cannot be any quibbling over the statement that from the standpoint of policy both political parties were of the same mind. There were independent men who broke away from party lines on that question and who chose to think for themselves as I do. First, there was George Brown. Then later there were my revered uncle, Dalton McCarthy, the member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), Col. O'Brien, the Hon. Clarke Wallace, Clifford Sifton, Joseph Martin, John Charlton, and several others—there are men who have always spoken their minds freely and from conviction. Then we come to 1895, when the agitation began with reference to the Manitoba schools. We then had, as you will remember, a fight in Haldimand. The Hon. Mr. Montague sought re-election after the remedial order was passed; we faced him in Haldimand and we were defeated. We fought the question over again in Cardwell and we won. As to what took place in Cardwell, I will have more to say, because upon that occasion a gentleman who has grown very eloquent in this House, spent a considerable time in that riding. A platform, upon which Mr. Stubbs, the McCarthy candidate was elected, was formulated, and the third plank in that platform was as follows:

To insist in the matter of education, so far as the subject is within the control of the parliament of Canada, that the provinces shall have exclusive authority, that no sectarian system shall be forced upon the provinces by Dominion legislation, and to further insist upon the abolition of the provision requiring the establishment of separate schools in the Territories.

Now, Sir, upon that we fought Cardwell, upon that we won Cardwell, and, as I say, the hon. gentleman who was the Finance Minister in that administration, the hon. gentleman who now represents North Toronto, made a great many speeches, of which I have extracts. Speaking on the 17th December, at Camilla, he said:

He showed how separate schools had originated at desire and the protection of Protestant minority in Quebec. This guarantee had been incorporated in the constitution at the time of confederation to protect the rights of minorities of all provinces.

At Alton he said:

He thought the narrow sectarian platform of Mr. McCarthy was not broad enough for the intelligent electors of Cardwell. The principle