

government the provisions under which they wished to be granted provincial status. That Bill has been under consideration since. Not only that, but it was in the possession of the present member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) and we had the advantage of his notes on that Bill and his consideration of it. The only exception was with respect to the clause regarding education. Let me deal with that, and I want to be precise. In so far as that clause is concerned, there is no direct reference to it in the Bill as it was submitted to us or in the Bill which was handed over to me by the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) previous to his going away on his last journey immediately before the session. But when that question came up for consideration I myself had a conference with Mr. Haultain, and I want now to say that in the statement I am about to make I have absolutely and exclusively to trust to my recollection of what took place in that meeting. I have no notes of what occurred, but I feel certain I can put almost in terms what passed between us. When that Bill was up for consideration it was necessary to refer to the educational clause; and on the Thursday preceding the day when the Bill was introduced Messrs. Bulyea, Haultain, Read and myself with two or three other members of the government—I forget who they were—discussed the measure. Then the question arose regarding schools, and I said to Mr. Haultain, what are we to do with respect to this educational clause? His answer to me was that provision was made for the school question, so far as the Northwest Territories were concerned, by section two of the Bill, section two being that section which makes applicable to the Northwest Territories the provisions of the British North America Act, section 93 included. My answer to that was that in my judgment to make the British North America Act applicable in these general terms would be fruitful of difficulties in the future, and I had no desire to have a repetition of the Manitoba school controversy. I wanted to make the position of the people in the Northwest with respect to educational matters so clear and simple that any man might understand the clause when he read it. I said that nothing should be left to doubt, uncertainty or misconception; and in so far as I am concerned, that clause, in the terms in which it is now drafted, was prepared merely for the purpose of giving to the people of the Northwest Territories those things which they now have and it never was intended to go one inch beyond that.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What does my hon. friend mean by that? He says the intention was to give the precise rights which are enjoyed at present. Of course that might be susceptible of two meanings, as my hon. friend will rightly gather. He knows what I mean, and I would ask him to be a little more precise.

Mr. FITZPATRICK.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I do not think that this is the proper time to discuss that provision of this Bill. When the time comes, it will be my duty to explain line by line and clause by clause this Bill from beginning to end, and I shall endeavour to do so to the best of my ability. But I think the question put by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition is a perfectly fair one, and I shall answer it as briefly as I can without, I trust, breaking to too great an extent the rules of the House. In 1875 the principle of separate schools was settled so far as the Northwest Territories are concerned, and so far as it could be settled under the provisional legislation of that time. Under the Act of 1875 a system of schools was created by an ordinance of the Territories; and to that system of schools so created, certain pecuniary allowances were made. This Bill is intended for no other purpose, in so far as I am concerned, than to give effect to that provision of the Act of 1875 and the conditions of the ordinances now in force in the Northwest Territories.

I am quite sure that I have trespassed on the attention of the House far beyond the limits I originally assigned to myself, but I would like to say a word in conclusion. My hon. friend the member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) has spoken of the 500,000 people in the Northwest who ought to be consulted. I have no desire to introduce unnecessarily controversial matter, but I ask him in all earnestness—and when I do so I ask him to remember the speeches he made in this House in 1896 which I read then and have read only quite recently—I ask him in all earnestness; have we no regard to pay in the settlement of that delicate question, to the opinion, the honest convictions of over forty per cent of the population of this Dominion? I say that there are deep seated prejudices being aroused, passions being inflamed, and the desire, I am quite convinced, of every man in this House is that peace should reign supreme throughout this land. All I say now, and I speak for myself, is that there can be no peace except that peace which is based on justice; there can be no peace except that peace which is based on equal rights and respect for the honest convictions of every man in this country.

Mr. W. H. BENNETT. (East Simcoe). Mr. Speaker, the government are at least to be congratulated on the fact that at last they have found some hon. gentleman ready to stand behind them and perhaps it may be that there is some truth in the rumour that the hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) is about to retire from the cabinet, and that to-night he is giving a parting shot. Be that as it may the hon. Minister of Justice has appeared as he always has done in his favourite role of fanning and appealing to prejudices. One would imagine that the hon. Minister of