

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

We are taunted very often by being asked why parliament has not repealed the enactment of 1875, if that enactment did not harmonize with the views of the people. Well, here is what Sir John Thompson said on that point. He said:

The better time to consider that question is when the Territories cease to be under territorial government and provinces are about to be created.

I am not prepared to say that this parliament had not the power to deal with that matter at an earlier date, but I believe there was a great deal of wisdom in the suggestion of Sir John Thompson. He did not want the country to be constantly in a turmoil of strife and feeling over this religious question. Knowing that the time would come when this issue would be raised, he preferred that it should remain dormant until such time as the Territories were to be made into provinces, and then the whole matter could be dealt with, instead of having the contention raised in 1894, to be repeated in 1905 or some other year, when a measure such as we are now discussing would come before the people. I think there was a great deal of wisdom in that suggestion, and I think that since we are now repealing the Territorial Act, this is the most opportune time which has offered itself within the last thirty years for the repeal of the measure that created the dual system of schools in the Territories. A Bill has been introduced by the right hon. the First Minister which provides for a dual system of schools, without the consent of the people of the Northwest. I do not think I am saying anything too strong when I say that we have not the consent of the people of the Northwest to this measure. They certainly have not been consulted. In fact, as I have already said, they have been misled. Shall I go too far if I say they have been deceived by the letter of the First Minister? They had the promise of the First Minister that when the new parliament was elected, he would be prepared to take up the question of provincial autonomy, and it was not to be a partial autonomy. Having that promise, the people of the west had every reason to believe that the leader of the government would be faithful to it, and that no matter who were returned as representatives from that country, full and complete autonomy or self-government would be extended those Territories. But what is provided by this Bill? We find that it provides for a dual system of schools. We find also that it appropriates moneys which we had previously set apart, under the Dominion Lands Act, for the support of public schools, and gives

them to separate schools. Hon. gentlemen opposite are never tired of telling us that these separate schools are all public schools. True they are schools for the public, but no one who understands the meaning of the term would admit for a moment that all the schools of the Northwest Territories are public schools. There is a marked distinction between the two classes of schools as will be seen by reference to the manner in which these schools are established. Let me quote from the Northwest ordinances to show how a school district is formed:

12. Any portion of the Territories may be erected into a public school district provided that—

(a) It does not exceed five miles in length or breadth exclusive of road allowances;

(b) It contains four persons actually resident therein who on the erection of the district would be liable to assessment, and twelve children between the ages of five and sixteen inclusive;

13. Any three residents in any area fulfilling the requirements of the next preceding section may be formed or may form themselves into a committee to procure its erection into a district and may petition the commissioner for such erection.

That is the way public school districts are formed, and a school formed in that manner would be a public school, according to the ordinances of the Northwest. But how are separate schools formed? Are they formed on the same lines? Not at all. In a district where a public school has been established, a certain number of people—I think only three ratepayers—who are of the Roman Catholic faith, or it might be three ratepayers who are Protestants if the school district did not satisfy them—at any rate three persons could petition to have a separate school district established.

To my mind this is conclusive evidence that there are two systems of schools in the Territories,—one public and the other separate. When we read the Dominion Lands Act, I cannot believe for a moment that the money which was set apart according to that Act—I think in 1883 or perhaps earlier—for the support of public schools was ever destined to be used for the support of any other kind of schools. Section two of subsection three of chapter 54 of 49 Victoria, provides as follows:

All moneys, from time to time, realized from the sale of school lands shall be invested in securities of Canada, to form a school fund, and the interest arising therefrom, after deducting the cost of management, shall be paid annually to the government of the province or territory within which such lands are situated, towards the support of public schools therein; and the moneys so paid shall be distributed for that purpose by the government of such province or territory in such manner as it deems expedient.

This clause certainly states that this interest shall be paid by the government of a province or territory, towards the support of public schools; not towards the support