

his own religion, he was a Canadian and a provincial rights man first and he would not interfere with the province even at the risk of being accused of disloyalty to his own religion. That argument prevailed with the people of the county I have the honour to represent, but the people soon discovered their mistake. Mr. Gibson who came to this House backed up by that pledge of his leader, four years afterwards in the same constituency was defeated by so weak and humble an individual as myself by a majority which represented a change of several hundred votes compared with the previous election. The people of Canada want public men to keep their political pledges. They do not want the Prime Minister to be in favour of provincial rights one day and against provincial rights another day when it suits his purpose. They want public questions to be dealt with on their merits whether these be religious questions or any other questions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I shall not do as the Postmaster General did and talk for two hours without dealing with the legal and constitutional aspect of the question except in so far as mere personal assertion is concerned. I shall quote the rest of the British North America Act which deals with the question, and leave it to the common sense of the members of this House and the common sense of the people of Canada to say whether the policy of the leader of the opposition as announced in his amendment, or the policy laid down in the redrafted Bill, is the correct one for us to pursue. The Bill undertakes to do something that is considered to be statesmanlike by the Postmaster General, but which unfortunately is not sufficiently statesmanlike to be constitutional. In the clause relating to education the Bill undertakes practically to amend the British North America Act, for it says:

Where the expression 'by law' is employed in subsection 3 of the said section 93 it shall be held to mean the law as set out in said chapters 29 and 30, and when the expression 'at the union' is employed in said subsection 3 it shall be held to mean the date at which the Act comes into force.

Now, the British North America says exactly the contrary to this, and we have therefore the sad spectacle that these gentlemen opposite who were once so loud in their pledges to protect provincial rights, now in their efforts to assail provincial rights not only jump clean over the autonomy of the provinces, but undertake to amend a law of the imperial parliament into the bargain. Well, I suppose they have just as much right to do one thing as the other; they have just as much right to amend an Imperial Act as to deprive the provinces of Canada of their constitutional powers. To listen to these gentlemen opposite one would sometimes think we were in the imperial House of Commons creating a new

British North America Act, and at another time that we were assembled in the legislature of the new provinces debating as to whether the provinces should have separate schools or not. I notice that every gentleman on the other side of the House who spoke in this debate took good care to stop short of discussing the question as to whether the Dominion or the province should pass educational laws. Some of them ventured to deal with the question whether or not we have the power, but none of them attempted to give a reason why, even if we had that power, we could exercise it any more sensibly than could the provinces themselves. They tell us that separate schools are good here and good there and good somewhere else, but they have no business to draw the deduction that separate schools would be good in Alberta and Saskatchewan. If this parliament is going to decide whether separate schools should or should not exist in Alberta, then we are going to do exactly the opposite to what occurred in relation to the same matter in the case of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Separate schools exist to-day in Ontario and Quebec because the people of these provinces administering their own local affairs, deem it wise that they should have separate schools. We are here dictating to the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta what they shall do in this regard, but the Dominion parliament never inflicted separate schools on Ontario or on Quebec or on British Columbia or on Nova Scotia or on Prince Edward Island. The hon. gentleman who for the time being is Postmaster General of Canada—we do not know how soon he will resign when he gets to understand this educational clause; he does not understand it yet. The Postmaster General told us that none of the statutes admitting new provinces into the confederation were alike. He told us that Ontario and Quebec had separate schools, but that in the case of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia separate schools were not established by law. I have here the statute under which Prince Edward Island was admitted into the Dominion, and that statute is silent on the question of separate schools. But the Postmaster General did not tell us why it is silent. If there is anything in the argument of the government it must be: that the province of Prince Edward Island was not entitled to have separate schools unless the Act gave power to establish such schools in that province. The logical result of the argument of the government is, that the Prince Edward Island Act being silent on the question of separate schools the question can not be dealt with at all in the case of that province.

They argue that the Bill now before us would be incomplete if section 16 were not there. It has never occurred to any of them