

religious education. But a question now arises, which I will not discuss at this moment, but I will do so later on, whether or not the old law of 1875 is still in force, or whether the new ordinance, which has done away with the control by the minority of the secular part of education, is in force. Now, we are asked, what is the difference between clause 16, No. 1, and clause 16, No. 2? The difference is simply this, that in clause 16, No. 1, the law of 1875 was enacted, giving to the minority—I suppose the Roman Catholic minority—the control over secular education as well as the control over religious education, whereas the new clause brings into force the existing law of the territories, the ordinance of 1901, by which the state has absolute control over the secular part of education, and the people have control simply of the religious part of education from half-past three in the afternoon. This is the absolute difference which exists between the old clause and the new clause. I have for my part agreed to the new clause 16, and in so doing I know that I have restricted my fellow-religionists in regard to some of the rights which they think they have at this moment. I shall explain in due time why I agreed to do so. But my duty at present is to state what the difference is, and there it is in a few words. If this law passes, as we think it ought, the legislature will have full control over the secular part of education, and the people will have full control over the religious part. The legislature does not attempt to control the religious part of education; but if the old law had remained in force, the legislature would have surrendered its control over the secular part as well as over the religious part of education. Now, I think I have made very clear what is the difference between section 16, No. 1, and section 16, No. 2. The motives which have influenced us in agreeing to that change I shall explain at the proper time. I do not propose to do so to-day, for this reason. I look at the House before me, and I see it absolutely disorganized. There are few members from the Northwest Territories, if there are any, present; and as they are most interested in this question, I want to discuss it in their presence. At the present moment I merely explain the difference between the two sections.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Will my right hon. friend be good enough to cite the words in the Act of 1875 which, in his opinion, give the control of secular education to the minority?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The words are there in substance.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I want them in the statute.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The hon. gentleman cannot have them in the statute if

they are not there; but I have given the interpretation as we understand it—'May establish such schools therein as they think fit.'

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. That is majority schools.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The minority schools are also provided for: That the minority of the ratepayers therein, may establish separate schools therein.' So I can only emphasize what I said a moment ago. The right to establish a separate school in a district which has been established by a majority is not given to a minority of lawyers, farmers, mechanics or any profession, but is given to a religious body—to the Protestants or the Catholics, nobody else. If that privilege is given to the minority of Catholics or Protestants, what can the reason be? It must be that they are not satisfied with the teaching which is given in those schools of the majority, because they believe in them their consciences are oppressed. I cannot see any other interpretation.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. As I understand the right hon. gentleman, his view is that these words give the right of complete control over school education: 'The minority of ratepayers therein, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, may establish separate schools therein.' That, in his opinion, gave complete control over school education.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No. What I say is this, that if the minority are not satisfied with the manner in which education is given in those schools, they have the right to secede. In other words, the right of secession, when it is given to a religious body, can have only one *raison d'être*, and that is that the conscience of the minority is oppressed. There can be no other reason.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I am not controverting anything the right hon. gentleman has said, but am merely endeavouring to understand his argument. He says there are some words in the Act of 1875 which give the minority an absolute right to the control of the education in their separate schools, and I have read him the only words in the Act of 1875 from which that right could be deduced: 'The minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, may establish separate schools therein.' It is upon those words the right hon. gentleman must depend.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Exactly the same words are contained in section 16, No. 2.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Very well; but my hon. friend has forgotten that if in section 16, No. 2, these words are found; there are also other words found in chapter 29, and these words are: