

that respect there is not very much difference. I was speaking about the difficulty in understanding the constitution, and to complete my argument I shall refer to two opinions. They have been quoted before, but they are to the point and they are the opinions of gentlemen who belong to the party opposite. The first one I shall read is that of Sir Louis Davies, and I read it because it appeals to me. In 1891, in discussing the charter of the Northwest Territories in this House, he said :

My opinion is now, and has been for years, that when the time comes to erect the Territories into provinces, you cannot withhold from the provinces so erected the right to determine for themselves the question of education.

That is all I ask. I do not ask you to establish national schools although I believe in national schools. All I ask you is to leave the question, as Sir Louis Davies says, to the provinces themselves.

I would be the last to favour this parliament imposing upon the people there any system of education, either free or separate. I only claim that when a Bill is introduced to erect those territories into provinces that Bill should contain a provision enabling the people of the different provinces so created to decide what system of education they will have.

That is very plain and distinct.

The late Hon. Mr. Mills, in the same debate said :

When the people of the Territories, or any portion of the Territories, are sufficiently numerous to constitute a province—when, in fact, they attain their majority in regard to local matters and when they propose to set up for themselves—this parliament has no right to exercise control over them. It can give good advice, but it has no right to give commands.

When the Territories have a sufficient population to entitle them to become a province, they must decide for themselves whether they will have separate schools or not.

Then we have the opinion of Mr. Christopher Robinson to the same effect, and we have besides an opinion which I respect very much, that of the leader of the opposition. It must be admitted that the preponderance of opinion is in favour of the provinces controlling their own educational affairs. The common sense view must be that if we are going to strain the constitution in either direction, it should be in the direction of provincial rights. The question to me is whether or not the policy of the Dominion government, in compelling new provinces to maintain separate schools, or if you like more than one system of schools, is a sound one. Should the provinces which have the controlling voice in this parliament to-day—the maritime provinces, Quebec and Ontario—combine to force on that great country a certain educational policy? I say no. It must be admitted that the sentiment of the constitution is that our education is purely a matter of local concern and it should be left to each province to determine for itself

the sort of educational system to be adopted. The main question is, as the 'Globe' has said, whether each province is to be allowed a free hand in the management of its local affairs or not. This system of schools which the government is attempting to force on the Northwest is impractical and wholly unsuited to the conditions that now exist and must continue to exist in that country. In Ontario you have different religions, but your people are essentially one people, and if that is true of Ontario it is true to a very much greater extent of Quebec. In Quebec, you have almost one religion, one language and one race. The people who have been brought up under these influences can possibly not realize the disadvantage of establishing the same condition of affairs in that great western country where we have so many different people coming in. It seemed to be assumed by some speakers in this debate that the only people in this country are Roman Catholics and Protestants, but we have also the Galicians, the Doukhobors, the Mormons, the Greeks and people of other religions. If we must have a separate school for Roman Catholics or Protestants then these other peoples have the same right to claim that privilege for themselves.

I shall call to the attention of the House the views which have been expressed by hon. gentlemen opposite a few years ago. The man on the street can express and act upon a certain opinion to-day and to-morrow express and act upon an opinion directly opposed without comment, but I say when the leader of a great party, when the executive and the members of a government take that course we have good reason to ask why and how they changed their opinion to this extent. The members of the government and their supporters can talk as loudly and as long as they like, but in 1896 they took a position diametrically opposed to the position they are taking to-day. I am not in sympathy with Sir Charles Tupper's Remedial Bill. As the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) said at that time—and I am going to read his words to you—the schools in Manitoba were a disgrace to that country, a disgrace to any country, and that was not so very long ago. I say that to-day we have as good—I shall not say any more than that—as good schools as there are in the Dominion of Canada. A great deal of stress has been laid by gentlemen opposite on the fact that there are in the Northwest to-day practically national schools, meaning, I presume, national schools as opposed to clerical schools. What influence has brought about the improved condition that we have to-day? Has it been the influence of clerical schools or of national schools? If it has been as they admit, the approach so nearly the national schools, is not that argument good. And if you carry that to a logical conclusion you should establish one system of schools to which the children of