

edly in his crusade against separate schools. They followed him even more devotedly, when he asked them to accept separate schools, to sacrifice their own opinions, and his own, upon the altar of the new country which it was his ambition to establish on this portion of the North American continent. If it were my privilege that my poor words might reach that staunch yeomanry of Ontario, I would remind them that the work of confederation is not yet finished; I would tell them that we are now engaged in advancing it; and I would ask them whether we are now to reverse our course, or whether we are not to continue to work it out to completion on the lines laid down by the great leader himself.

Now, Sir, such was the condition of things at the time of confederation. But I shall be told that this exception applies to Ontario and Quebec alone, and not to the other provinces. Sir, that is true. Amongst the four provinces then united, Ontario and Quebec alone had a system of separate schools. But I reminded the House a moment ago that it was not the intention of the fathers of confederation, it was not the intention of Sir John Macdonald or Mr. Brown to limit confederation to the narrow bounds it had in 1867. They had made provision in the very instrument of confederation, to extend it over the northern part of the continent; they had made provision to take in British Columbia, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island; they had made provision to take in also the Northwest Territories, which were then uninhabited, but which now have a teeming population and are at our doors asking admission. Is it reasonable to suppose, if the Confederation Act recognizes that other provinces were to come into confederation similarly situated to Ontario and Quebec, that the same privileges should not be given to the minority as were given to the minority in Ontario and Quebec? What would have been the value of the invitation to enter confederation, if the provinces invited to enter, had been told that the security to the minority given to Ontario and Quebec was a privilege which they need not expect from us? Section 43 of the Quebec resolutions has become section 93 of the British North America Act, and is no longer confined to Quebec and Ontario. Here it is:

In and for each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education, subject and according to the following provision:—

1. Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law in the province at the union.

So, Sir, now whenever a province comes here knocking at this door, asking to be admitted into confederation, if in that province there exists a system of separate schools, the British North America Act has provided that the same guarantee we give

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to the minority in Quebec and Ontario shall also be given to the minority in that province. Shortly after confederation had been established, that is, in the year 1870, the parliament of Canada had an opportunity of applying the doctrine contained in the British North America Act in the creation of the province of Manitoba. Until its admission into the Dominion, Manitoba had no regular government. It had been loosely administered by the Hudson Bay Company. There had been some schools in it, maintained by such authority as there was. There had been separate schools maintained by Roman Catholic missionaries. It was the intention of parliament to give the minority the system that they had before confederation; and, so marked was their intention, that instead of accepting without qualification the words of section 93 of the British North America Act, 'right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law in the province at the union,' they made it read 'by law or practice in the province at the union.' It turned out, as determined by judicial authority, that the province of Manitoba, when it entered confederation, had no system of schools either by law or practice. It followed, as a consequence, that the power of the province of Manitoba with regard to the subject of education was as complete as that of the province of Nova Scotia or the province of New Brunswick. This is a principle which was not understood at the time by hon. gentlemen opposite when they were on this side of the House. There was the fact, the positive fact—the power of the province of Manitoba with regard to education was as unshackled as that of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In 1875, as I stated a moment ago, Mr. Mackenzie introduced an Act for the government of the Northwest Territories, and in this Act the parliament of Canada, which, at that time, had among its members some of the ablest men who ever sat in a Canadian parliament—Sir John Macdonald, Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Blake, Sir Charles Tupper and a score of others—unanimously, deliberately and with their eyes open, introduced into the Northwest Territories the system of separate schools. And not only that, but the parliament of Canada, four times successively—in 1880, in 1885, in 1886 and in 1898—deliberately and with their eyes open, ratified the system of separate schools in the Territories.

Mr. SPROULE. I would like to ask here one question, if the right hon. gentleman will allow me?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes.

Mr. SPROULE. The right hon. gentleman gave the House to understand that Hon. George Brown supported the principle of separate schools. May I ask if it is not true that Mr. Brown, in 1875, op-