

Mr. SPROULE. That is as I understood him and the Northwest Territories of their own free will and accord have adopted a system. Does he consider that the law which compelled them to adopt that system gave them any opportunity of exercising freedom either of will or judgment? They were obliged to do it, whereas Manitoba acted of her own judgment and free will.

Mr. FIELDING. Did not the Northwest legislature by a resolution some years ago refuse to ask for a repeal of their clause thereby confirming it?

Mr. SPROULE. That does not confirm it at all.

Mr. FIELDING. I say yes.

Mr. GRANT. My good friend—I may call him so—from East Grey, is no doubt an expert in medicine but I do not know if he and I entered into a legal argument either he or I would be wiser nor would the House be the wiser for that argument. I would say that the Northwest Territories by their ordinances have practically set up a system of schools satisfactory to themselves, because in my judgment—and I give it for what it is worth—they have very much restricted the rights of the minority as expressed and given by the law of 1875, and I think Sir John Thompson was of that opinion and practically expressed it in a minute of council in reference to the petition for disallowance in 1894, so that I say, by taking the action which they did take, they to some extent at least have formulated a school policy that is satisfactory to themselves. It is also to be remembered that this Dominion parliament in 1875 held out the assurance of certain educational privileges to the minority and it is to this parliament that that minority must look for the protection of its rights. The legislation of 1875 in regard to education may have been ill-advised; I do not say whether it was or not, it may have been ill-advised or it may have been very wise legislation. However, it has remained ever since on our statute-book and therefore I say that the somewhat specious phrase 'trust the new provinces' has no particular force. The promise was made, the undertaking was entered into by this Dominion parliament and this sovereign parliament having enacted the law, having held out the inducement to the incoming settler, having continued the law in force, gave every sign that the law was to remain in force. It is, therefore, incumbent on this parliament to follow the course set forth in the Bill. I have wondered since this agitation began, whether if the original proportion of Catholics and Protestants had remained in those Territories we would have had all the trouble and commotion that we have to-day. As I understand it, at the very beginning of the settlement of those new Territories the Catholic people

were largely in the majority. They were the first settlers, they were the pioneers of those districts and were necessarily in the great majority. I want to know if that preponderance of Catholic population had kept up in the Territories and we found it existing to-day if we would have all this trouble and agitation over our proposals. I think, Mr. Speaker, we would have had a demand for the Protestant separate schools that they have in the province of Quebec to-day, and as a Protestant, if it were the very last vote I gave in the House of Commons, I would give that vote with the feeling that I was only doing equity and dealing fairly with this minority in casting my vote for the perpetuation of their privileges.

Now, Sir, I have said that the hon. leader of the opposition made it a point that the merits and demerits of separate schools did not enter into this discussion. Hon. gentlemen opposite apparently did not think so and I have wondered too how some of them could bring themselves to support in its entirety the amendment offered by the hon. leader of the opposition to this Bill because quite possibly the logical effect of the amendment of the hon. leader of the opposition might be to bring into force a full dual system of sectarian schools in the new provinces. I do not say whether that would be a blessing or whether that would be a great detriment to those new provinces, but I do say that hon. gentlemen opposite who have gone out of their way to attack separate schools should think twice and that they should think long before they vote for an amendment which may have the effect that I have just pointed out. I come from the province of Ontario. I do not know that separate schools have worked very badly in Ontario. I am like the hon. leader of the opposition; I argue not for them. I argue not against them, but I have been observing in the province of Ontario and I am bound to say, whether I like the system or whether I dislike the system, that I have seen no evils arising from separate schools in Ontario. I do not think the system tends to disunite. I do not think it tends to any vital separation of the people. I know that in my own riding we have a number of separate schools. I know of no spot in the whole Dominion where people of different creeds live together in greater amity and concord than in my own riding of North Ontario and particularly in two townships where the population is very evenly divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and where, I am very happy to say, both unite in supporting the humble individual who is now addressing the House. In this onslaught upon separate schools it is well to remember that separate schools, as I have said, have worked not badly in the province of Ontario and while I expressly refrain from expressing my opinion in regard to them on this occasion, because it is not necessary, I want to refer

Mr. GRANT.