

not only in its character from a colonial standpoint, but likewise by its being graced with the presence of an Imperial Councillor in the person of the Earl of Jersey thereby evidencing that interest which the mother land takes, and which we trust she will always take in the prosperity of her colonies. On that occasion resolutions were passed asking that the Imperial Government might be pleased in their wisdom to enact legislation which should give to those Australian colonies the rights and privileges which are enjoyed by the people of Canada in reference to commercial treaties, and I was pleased to hear it announced in the Speech from the Throne that such legislation had been enacted, and we trust and hope that by reason of it, there may be inaugurated between the Dominion and the provinces of Australasia, a stream of commerce and trade which will be an enduring benefit to both, and which will tend to bind in closer unity and to knit together these colonies of that great Empire of which we are pleased to be an integral part. In the Address there is a most pleasing reference made to His Excellency the Governor General. Coming here as the successor to distinguished noblemen, His Excellency found for himself no easy task: but, Sir, I believe that the conduct of His Excellency, since he has been in Canada, manifesting in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the commonwealth a deep and abiding interest, has caused the people to have for him a warm place in their hearts, and also for his most excellent consort, who has most ably seconded all his efforts. And when the time comes for His Excellency to pass from his present position to those high duties which we trust the Imperial Government will hereafter assign to him, I believe he will, like his predecessors, lend his hearty aid to the promotion of the material prosperity of this colony in the mother land. And now, Sir, I come to discuss a matter not pertaining to commerce, but involving one of those unfortunate questions which unhappily for the public of Canada, it seems are never to end. We in Canada had thought when the consolidation of the different provinces was brought about, that then once and for ever there would be a stilling of all discord in respect to questions of race and religion. We thought those differences would be quelled; we thought they would be buried in oblivion never again to be resurrected. But, unfortunately, differences of opinion on these questions have arisen from time to time, and within the last few years what is known to-day as the Manitoba school question has been before the people of this Dominion, and is at the present time more particularly before the people of the province of Manitoba for adjudication. In 1870, after negotiations, Manitoba was admitted into the confederation.

Mr. BENNETT.

Prior to that time there had been in that region no settled form of government, no institutions with provincial autonomy; and consequently there had been a school system free to all sects, and not owing thanks to any government for contributions or aid. The Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians, and the Presbyterians each had their own schools; and so, when the province of Manitoba was admitted into the confederacy, and had engrafted upon its constitution all the rights and privileges which are conferred upon the other provinces, power was given to that province to deal with the question of education exclusively, subject, however, to those limitations and provisos which were contained in the Manitoba Act, which Act was afterwards approved of by the Federal Government of Canada. Under this system, from the year 1870 to the year 1890, educational matters in Manitoba pursued the even tenor of their way, and from neither one side nor the other were heard any complaints or remonstrances. There were the two religious bodies, those professing the Protestant faith and those professing the Roman Catholic faith, living side by side in unity, carrying on the institutions of the country, but reserving to themselves, as they each had the right to do, the educational system they preferred. But, Sir, it remained for the hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Martin), and those with whom he was associated, at one fell stroke to interfere with all existing regulations, and to sweep away all the vested rights that up to that time existed; and then commenced this unhappy friction which has been disturbing that country from that day to this. When that legislation was put into effect in Manitoba the Roman Catholic minority of the province, feeling aggrieved, feeling that they had not been dealt fairly by, feeling, as the facts show, that the Manitoba Government had given a pledge that those vested rights should not be interfered with, appealed to the superior power, the Federal Government at Ottawa, to exercise the veto power of disallowance in their behalf. That appeal having been made to the Federal Government, what was their answer? it having been stated that the Act of the Manitoba legislature was not within the power of that legislature—that, according to the legal expression, the Act was *ultra vires*. That question having been raised and argued, the Federal Government declined to intervene, and left the matter to be adjudicated in the courts. Afterward, the case known as the Barrett case, which was submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada and afterwards carried on appeal to the Privy Council of England was instituted when it was decided by the highest court that the Act was fully within the power of the local legislature. Debarred from redress on their legal rights, the minority then had recourse to another form of appeal which had been suggested, and