

with respect to denominational schools, which any class of persons had by law or practice in the province at the union. Notwithstanding the Public School Act of 1890, Roman Catholics, and members of every other religious body in Manitoba, are free to establish schools throughout the province; they are free to maintain their schools by school-fees or voluntary subscriptions; they are free to conduct their schools according to their own religious tenets, without molestation or interference. No child is compelled to attend a public school. No special advantage, other than the advantage of a free education in schools conducted under public management, is held out to those who do attend. But then, it is said, that it is impossible for Roman Catholics, or for members of the Church of England (if their views are correctly represented by the Bishop of Rupert's Land, who has given evidence in Logan's case) to send their children to public schools where the education is not superintended and directed by the authorities of their church; and that, therefore, Roman Catholics and members of the Church of England who are taxed for public schools, and at the same time feel themselves compelled to support their own schools, are in a less favorable position than those who can take advantage of the free education provided by the Act of 1890. That may be so. But what right or privilege is violated or prejudicially affected by the law? It is not the law that is in fault; it is owing to religious convictions, which everybody must respect, and to the teaching of their Church, that Roman Catholics and the members of the Church of England find themselves unable to partake of advantages which the law offers to all alike."

And when it is said that such an interpretation of the Act leaves it a nullity, and without possibility of application to anything, Supreme Court says that that cannot be helped:

"It has been objected, that if the rights of Roman Catholics, and of other religious bodies, in respect of their denominational schools, are to be so strictly measured and limited by the practice which actually prevailed at the time of the union, they will be reduced to a condition of a 'natural right,' which does not want any legislation to protect it. Such a right, it was said, cannot be called a privilege, in the proper sense of the word. If that be so, the only result is, that the protection which the Act purports to extend to rights and privileges, existing 'by practice,' has no more operation than the protection which it purports to afford to rights and privileges existing by law. It can hardly be contended that, in order to give a substantial operation and effect to a saving clause, expressed in general terms, it is incumbent upon the court to discover privileges which are not apparent of themselves, or to describe distinctive and peculiar features to rights which seem to be of such a common type as not to deserve special notice or require special protection."

The Act, then, is valid and constitutional. But the Catholics have another shot in the locker. The charter of Manitoba has these clauses, also:

"An appeal shall lie to the Governor-General in Council from any act or decision of the Legislature of the Province, or of any provincial authority, affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education.

"In case any such provincial law, as, from time to time, seems to the Governor-General in Council requisite for the due execution of the provisions of this section is not made, or in case any decision of the Governor-General in Council, on any appeal under this section, is not duly executed by the proper provincial authority in that behalf, then, and in every such case, and as far only as the circumstances of each case may require, the Parliament of Canada may make remedial laws for the due execu-