

have in the Territories established a school system which we believe to be the best in Canada, and which has worked satisfactorily ever since it was introduced in 1892. The principle of that system is to leave in the hands of the provincial government the absolute control and jurisdiction over secular education and to allow in the schools, both public and separate, one-half hour of religious instruction, if desired by the trustees. To continue that system is, I understand, the object of the government, and in order to make sure that that system will be continued and that the right to the half hour religious instruction will be continued to public as well as separate schools, I make the motion which I have already read, namely :

That to subsection 1 there be added these words : Or with respect to religious instruction in any public or separate school as provided for by the said ordinances.

Mr. SPROULE. It seems to me that if the aim of the hon. gentleman be what he says it is, he is taking a very unusual way to accomplish it. Suppose that the trustees of any public school were all Roman Catholics and that Protestant children are attending to it, what kind of religious instruction would be there given? No doubt it would be the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church that would be taught. The hon. gentleman is not only conceding the right to Roman Catholic separate schools to teach the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, but he is providing to enable that same church to teach its doctrines in a public school, even though a large number of Protestants may attend it.

Mr. LAMONT. The provision, as it exists in the school system of the Territories today, is exactly the same as the one I am asking this committee to carry into effect. For thirteen years we have had experience of that system, and it has worked satisfactorily, both in districts in which the Catholics are in a majority and in the much greater number of districts in which the Protestants are in the majority. And the reason is this. In those districts in which the Protestants are largely in the majority and the trustees are Protestants, the trustees have always been willing to allow the Roman Catholic ratepayers the right to have their children given Roman Catholic religious instruction in the public schools within the half-hour prescribed; and in these districts in which the Roman Catholics are in the majority and in which the majority of the trustees are Roman Catholics, they have always been willing to make a similar concession in favour of the Protestant minority. It is merely to continue this system which has been found satisfactory that I move the amendment.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman is evidently seeking to give another concession

to the Roman Catholic church. I asked the Minister of Justice what was the position under the new clause. And if I understood him rightly, he said that the Roman Catholics could not take control of a public school and teach in it the dogmas of their church.

Mr. LAMONT. In the districts in which the Roman Catholics are in the majority, they can have whatever religious instruction the trustees may desire or permit. And in the districts where the Protestants are in the majority, the same right exists as regards Protestants. The provision applies equally to both. From nine o'clock to three thirty neither Catholics nor Protestants, nor any other power except the civil government, have the right to say what will be done in those schools; but in the half hour subsequent such religious instruction may be given as the trustees may desire. In those districts where the Catholics are in the majority, if the Protestants are not allowed by the Roman Catholic trustees to give their children the religious instruction they desired, they have the right to form a separate school of their own, and that would entail on the Catholic trustees additional taxation as well as additional taxation on the separate schools. No Protestant child is obliged to stay and receive religious instruction from a Catholic teacher, nor is any Catholic child bound to stay and receive instruction from a Protestant teacher.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Will the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lamont) allow me one question? Could not the local legislature change that privilege in the future if they saw fit?

Mr. LAMONT. I fancy the local legislature could do so if they wished.

Mr. INGRAM. That being the case, I would ask the hon. gentleman this question: Supposing that this parliament passed this section as amended, could the local legislature change it?

Mr. LAMONT. The local legislature could not then pass any law which would prejudicially affect any right or privilege granted under subsection 1, which, like the clause in the British North America Act, prevents any interference with the denominational schools provided for by subsection 1 of sec. 93.

Mr. LAKE. I am personally greatly in favour of allowing this half hour's instruction at the end of the school time. But I am unalterably opposed to interference by this parliament with the rights of the new provinces. Therefore, I shall vote against the proposal to interfere with these rights.

Mr. INGRAM. I would like to ask—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. This amendment was first brought to the attention of the committee only fifteen minutes ago. We