

entitled to more equitable financial treatment, at least, from the hands of the provincial authorities with respect to these funds that have been earmarked for educational purposes.

Now, the present bill will eliminate this existing protection—be it legislative, be it moral, be it historical, call it what you wish—this statutory trust limitation or obligation, which I must insist again was part of a freely entered upon agreement by each of the three provinces back in 1930. This elimination is a matter of concern to me, as it is to the honourable senator from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin), and I am unable to support the bill in its present form.

(Translation):

Hon. Cyrille Vaillancourt: Honourable senators, at this time, my thoughts take me back a great many years ago, in 1896, when my father was a member of the House of Commons. That year, the school issue had come up and was being referred to as “the North-West school issue”. I remember that my father had then changed his allegiance in order to vote for the Remedial Act for the schools in the North West. When Confederation took place, according to the British North America Act, the protection of minorities had been guaranteed. At that time, indeed, the minority in the province of Manitoba was not Roman Catholic; it was the Protestant community which was in minority. For twenty years, the principle was adhered to, the same as in the province of Quebec. It is only around 1896 that a new legislation was passed, and five members of the province of Quebec seceded from their party in order to vote for the Remedial Act sponsored by Sir Charles Tupper. Subsequently, in Manitoba, things changed; the Protestant community became the majority and the Catholics, the minority.

Now, if for many years there has been an injustice, is it any reason why we should perpetuate that same injustice today? However, under the British North America Act the provinces are responsible for education.

I would like at this time to appeal to the province of Manitoba to redress the injustice it committed many years ago and to give justice to the minorities, as is done in the province of Quebec and in the other provinces where minorities are treated in an equitable manner.

In 1967, we are going to celebrate the Centennial of Confederation. Will it be the centennial of disunity or that of a real union and of true co-operation? In order to reach

this goal, it would be necessary to avoid the use, honestly and consciously, of the terms “Catholics and Protestants”; we should use instead the word “Canadians” so that these two great people who have founded such a great country—which we want stronger and greater still so that it may fulfil its destiny—may walk hand in hand, with a sense of fairness and co-operation and so that in 1967, instead of erecting statues of stone and bronze we should build a real monument of peace, life and charity. Confederation must truly be a confederation so that nobody, from any part of the country, may come and tell us: “As you are a minority, you will not enjoy the same rights as others.”

I do not want to labour the point, but I would like to urge all men of good will to treat fairly our people as well as other minorities and more particularly those concerned in the case which is before us today. Imagine what would happen if such a thing occurred in the province of Quebec: it would mean a revolution. Would it be fair? No, it would not. Why should things be different somewhere else? Since the legislation which is before us today seems once again to deprive us of rights issuing from the British North America Act—as was said by our colleague from Winnipeg North. (Hon. Mr. Wall)—I too cannot vote for this bill.

Hon. Gustave Monette: Honourable senators, it is not without a deep emotion, much misgivings and after considerable thought that I rise in order to express my views on this delicate matter. Since last night I have gone through some nerve-racking moments as I endeavoured to put together the various aspects of this matter, which would enable me, also, to do it justice.

Honourable senators, if I say that this matter is contentious, it is because it has given rise and still threatens to give rise to quarrels which usually are fought with sincerity and with a true desire to treat everyone with justice and to strengthen unity. But although these controversial matters are not always expressed in such a way as might show the origin of the differences, or the text of the act and the developments that have occurred, I realize that this is not done with the intention of deceiving, but simply because the problem is blurred by the passing of time. Those of us who are lawyers—and even more so those who are not—must look into the historical events of the past to find the legal aspect of the matter, that is the legal status which was determined in 1896 as a result of a decision of the Privy Council in London. We must turn back the pages of history and that is what I have done since this morning.