

There is no room for doubt as to the facts and of the existence of the Catholic Schools under the sanction of such law as obtained in the Red River Settlement before 1870, although previous to that no Legislative sanction had taken place, solely for the good and all-sufficient reason that there existed no Legislature in the Settlement prior to its entry into Confederation when the Province was erected and a Legislature assigned to it. But the schools existed as a fact, and had existed from the very earliest settlement of the country, when it became the rendezvous of those hardy pioneers of civilization, the French Canadian *voyageurs* and *coureurs des bois*, the homes of their wives and children and the missions of their devoted clergy. Then and at a time far beyond the memory of living man were Catholic Schools established and those people continued in the uninterrupted enjoyment of them down to the period of the erection of the Province in 1870 and thenceforward to the year of 1890. It would be useless to deny it, for it is matter of authentic history and of common notoriety; it would be as futile to dispute the fact that seasons of the year prevailed in the Red River Settlement before it became the Province of Manitoba as elsewhere.

The Manitoba minority, therefore, are clearly within their rights in demanding justice and redress at the hands of the Government and Parliament of Canada. They are British subjects, and like all other subjects of Her Majesty, are entitled to those rights which to Britons belong. The Act which deprived them of their rights was one of legal spoliation which they cannot in reason be expected to endure while the Privy Council of England has declared that the authority of the Government and Parliament of Canada is supreme and can apply appropriate remedy.

If then, Electors of Glengarry, the Government of Canada deals with this matter as a Government question or goes to the Country with a declared policy of well-defined and satisfactory relief, I will be found standing where in the past I have ever stood, sinking all personal differences however great or grievous I have found them to be, and supporting with might and main the candidate of the Conservative party, be the nominee who he may or my personal relations with him what they may. The Electors of Glengarry are aware that never in the past have I allowed personal differences or grievance to stand in the way nor any ambition of mine to alter my course of unwavering loyalty to that great party led so often to victory by Sir John Macdonald, greater and most illustrious, as he was also most just of Canadian Statesmen, and to which, by birth, by tradition and conviction and the associations of a lifetime I belong, and for which in my four and forty years of life I have fought at least a hundred battles with loyalty and courage always and not infrequently with success, not for myself but for others.

But I claim at the hands of the leader of the party and his colleagues charged with the direction and control of affairs a declaration of their policy on the vexed and all-absorbing question now engaging the attention of the Canadian people and of such vast moment to our fellow-subjects who compose the minority in the Province of Manitoba. As a lifelong supporter of the Conservative cause (as, Electors of Glengarry, those of you longest resident of the County know my family ever to have been since the earliest times in the history of this Country, whether they sat in Parliament as representatives or as electors polled their votes) I have a right to require it, and you and the people of Canada have the right to be taken into their confidence. It must be definite and binding upon the Government and the Conservative party throughout the Dominion, and especially upon those who seek under its banner to be returned to the next Parliament; it must be in accordance with the traditions of the Conservative party, which, under the leadership of Sir John Macdonald, maintained power owing to the fact that it maintained the right; and it must therefore be one which will satisfy the reasonable claims and rights of the minority in Manitoba, despoiled of their rights and now claiming justice at the hands of a Government clothed with the power if it be possessed of the desire and determination of placing them in the position in which they stood previous to the passage of the unjust law which is the subject of their legitimate and well-founded complaint.

Upon that assurance being authoritatively given I shall not, as I have stated, be a candidate at the polls.

But if it be not given, I now publicly pledge myself, *coute qu'il coute*, and quite regardless as to how far my doing so may conflict with the selfish ambition of any individual however designing and aspiring, to ask the people of Glengarry, Protestant and Catholic, hitherto Conservative and erstwhile Reformer alike, to justify and endorse the principle upon which I shall appeal to them, namely: that no wrong capable of being redressed by the paramount authority of the Government and Parliament of the Dominion shall be perpetrated by its Legislature upon the minority in any Province of the Dominion, and be perpetuated and condoned under the fallacious plea of Provincial rights.