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The Provincial Legislature.

The Legislative Assembly which had stood adjourned for some weeks was unable to meet yesterday at 3 o'clock as intended, in consequence of the non arrival of a number of members delayed in the stalled trains on the railway. It would almost appear that some fatality is hanging over this Legislature, it has been so difficult to get it convened from the start. The trains from the west were freed late in the afternoon and a sufficient number of members were in attendance to reopen the long adjourned session in the evening about 8 o'clock. The very first step in the proceedings was the cause of an animated discussion and of holding the Government up to ridicule. Several of the members returned at the general election had not been sworn in on the opening day of the session in consequence of inability to be present. Most of these were in attendance last evening and before the Speaker took the chair the Clerk of the House proceeded to swear them in by virtue of a commission issued to him for that purpose by the Lieutenant Governor. Mr. A. P. Prowse was the only opposition member elected present who had not already been sworn in; but he did not come forward with those Government supporters who approached the Clerk's desk. As soon as the Speaker took the chair Mr. Mathieson, Leader of the Opposition, took exception to the proceedings that had just terminated. He pointed out in forcible language that the course pursued was an infringement of the privileges of the House and an invasion of the rights of the Speaker. There were but two ways in which members could be sworn in. By commission, as at the opening of a new Legislature, when there is no Speaker and no Clerk. This was the only way in which the swearing in could be done at that stage when there was no organization. But when the House had been constituted and organized by electing its Speaker and Clerk, then it was all powerful to deal with its members and with everything that came before it. Any interference with its rights and privileges, as thus constituted was, he contended, a serious matter, and one that should not be tolerated in any British Parliament. Such interference with the rights and privileges of Parliament had caused grave troubles in days gone by, and had been the cause of war on more than one occasion. Mr. Morson followed Mr. Mathieson and further showed up the very irregular and unprecedented course pursued by the Government in this matter. After the discussion on this incident subsided Hon. Mr. Peters and Hon. Mr. Reid who had been returned at by-elections were sworn in and introduced to the Speaker. Then Mr. A. P. Prowse, who was in attendance, was conducted to the Clerk's desk by Mr. Mathieson and Mr. McKimbon, took the oath, signed the roll and was introduced to Mr. Speaker amid opposition applause. Mr. Prowse refused to be sworn in by the Clerk before the Speaker took the chair; but the Government supporters on the Government's advice were sworn in in that way as shown above. Does it not look as if the Government had stiffened themselves and acknowledged the irregularity of their first proceeding by swearing in Mr. Prowse in the way pointed out as the correct way by Mr. Mathieson?

Dominion Parliament.

FOSTER'S SPEECH IN THE AUTONOMY BILL DEBATE.

After the opening routine on March 29, Hon. Geo. E. Foster resumed the autonomy bill debate in one of the ablest speeches ever heard in the house. He held the floor till six o'clock. He pointed out in opening that while there was a time when principle had weight and importance in Canadian politics, since the present government came into power it was the last thing they thought of putting into practice. So it was with the constitution of the country, which was only dragged in by the prime minister as a football for the play of his followers. It was Laurier's object in introducing the autonomy bill that the principle of separate schools

should be embodied in the act, cost what it might. He had carried his way and now had the satisfaction of seeing the kickers crawling back to the kennel. It did not suit Laurier to bring in this bill before the recent general election, and he had not said a word about it, even to Mr. Sifton, nor to Hon. Mr. Haultain, premier of the Northwest Territories, although he had led parliament to believe that the measure was the result of the consensus of opinion of the entire cabinet. Not one of the Northwest members of parliament had been consulted. Mr. Foster then called attention to the peculiar circumstances in connection with the resignation of Mr. Sifton, who, according to his own view, had been able to put the ring into the nose of the government and bring it to its knees. Mr. Sifton had declared that as soon as he read the school clause he went to the prime minister and discussed the matter with him. The result of the conference was that Mr. Sifton resigned because he could not swallow clause 16. Later Sir Wilfrid had declared that he never intended the school legislation to go any further than what the Roman Catholics of the Northwest at present enjoy. Mr. Fitzpatrick had said the same thing. Now, it was to be presumed that when Mr. Sifton went to Sir Wilfrid and told him that he could not agree to clause 16, the prime minister would say to him: "I never meant what you read in the clause. All that I mean is that the Roman Catholics of the Northwest shall retain the privileges which they possess at the present time." Did that conversation take place? If it had then at that moment Mr. Sifton and the prime minister were one and there need have been no resignation. Prolonged applause. The prime minister did not appear to have done either one thing or the other, and therefore Mr. Sifton's resignation was a mystery most mysterious. Was it on the card that he should resign, and was this misunderstanding allowed to continue to give him an opportunity of resigning? (Conservative cheers.) Within three weeks time the amended clause was brought down exactly to the liking of the ex-minister of the interior. Why could not Sir Wilfrid have told him three weeks before and thus have kept his minister of the interior PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS. An honorable gentleman had declared as the culmination of his argument that it was impossible for Catholics to thoroughly enjoy their religion unless they had the complete control of their education. If that were the belief of the member for Labelle or of any other good Catholic, Mr. Foster quailed with no man's belief. It has been the fashion during his debate, and it followed from good feeling, to disclaim any personal bias when speaking of each other as Protestants or Catholics. He did not want to enter into that apology or to even affirm it was necessary, but he wanted to say this in justice to himself. He had been in public life since 1883, he had spoken a good deal through the country, and his speeches had been reported. If any man could put his finger on one single sentence spoken here or spoken elsewhere in which he had uttered one illiberal or bigoted thought with reference to his Roman Catholic fellow countrymen he would be thankful for him to do it. (Cheers.) I don't think, said Mr. Foster, any man can. There is one circle which envelopes every man that is sacred for himself. It is the circle in which his God and his conscience meet. Against what occurs in that inner circle I have absolutely no right to intrude, and I claim the same treatment for myself. But this is what I mean. If these were the opinions of the member for Labelle, and undoubtedly they were, what does he want in these provinces? What else can he want but a thing that will do him good from his point of view, a thing that is absolutely essential if he is not going to have a mere sham. The half hour privilege at the end of the school day to put a priest in the school room to teach the dogmas of the church, will that satisfy him? Is that the culmination of his depth of belief and his power of argument? PROTECT TO THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY. In course of his argument Foster said: "Do not let us merge the incidental into the essential. Let us protect the majority as well as the minority. The essential thing is that the provinces should have exclusive control of education. But those wise fathers of confederation sitting there in Quebec city said: 'Here is Ontario and here is Quebec.' We

want separate schools for Catholics in Ontario and for Protestants in Quebec and the suggestion was made by Mr. McGee to this effect: 'Yes we will do that, but we will simply put this rider on it, save and except as to the interests of the two Canadas.' That is all that was done at Quebec. That is all to the very letter and that was passed by the legislatures of Upper and Lower Canada. There were present representatives from the maritime provinces and also the representatives from these two provinces. That was their compact and that was all of it. That gave no right for anybody to compact the rights of the minorities in those two provinces while forty or fifty years later you take provinces out of the Northwest Territories, you are on account of the compact, to establish separate schools for the minorities in these provinces. Not in the least. But that compact went over to the other side of the water. The Protestant minority voiced by Mr. Galt said: That does not suit our Protestants here; we are peculiarly situated; we have been trying to get certain amendments to our act to better protect us; these have been protected, but you have not been able to carry them out; now we cannot willingly go into confederation unless we get those. In the last analysis it came to this: You cannot get them until after confederation. After confederation, the very first year, we will put them in. Then Mr. Galt said at London: Very well then we must make that promise binding by the constitution; we must add that other clause that not only if the time of confederation separate schools exist, but if legislation is had after confederation giving separate schools and then if they should be taken away a grievance will exist, the rights of the minority will be prejudiced, and there will be an appeal to the sovereign power, the aggregation of the colonies. That is the history of it and the whole history of it. You may search the whole history of it from first to last and that is a fair statement of the case. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, not by compact, but in London, had this united upper and lower Canada saving clause which allied to all the provinces at the time of the union. It was generalized; it was the old principle, but extended to the other provinces. That is what you may call the confederation act. When you come to the B. N. A. act you can get all there is in that act, and you have a right to get it. But I say to the right hon. gentleman who contends that he is bound by the confederation act to give to these Northwest provinces the same rights that are possessed by Ontario and Quebec, that he has pulled the contract beyond its absolute and reasonable meaning, and, in the opinion of Laurier's equality as good as himself he has no warrant for the same that he is compelled by the B. N. A. act to grant or to place into the constitution of the Northwest territories such a principle as he proposes to enshrine in that constitution. A HISTORICAL REFERENCE. One point more with reference to that Manitoba case. I have said that the Catholic or any minority in this Dominion never had a case so clear for remedial legislation as had the Manitoba minority in 1896. All the legal difficulties are out of the way, all the decisions are given and the path was absolutely clear between that minority with its grievance and the power and jurisdiction to remedy it, namely, this Dominion. But other men across the way prevented it. The right hon. gentleman presented as if any hon. friend of Labelle (Mr. Bonanza) complains that the Manitoba minority is suffering from injustice today, it is because his leader threw him across the path of that remedial bill and prevented its enactment. More has happened since that. I regret in no single jot or tittle my act in 1896. Under similar circumstances I would do the same thing, but I do not at all say that I will ever do the same thing under the circumstances that may arise after this. Why? Because there is a power which, after all, is mightier than the constitution. We invaded the constitution in 1896. We tried to give it its full force in a clear case, and we were prevented by the leader of a great party. After we were prevented, that leader and his party went to the people in 1896, 1900 and 1904, and the people declared that they did not want remedial legislation. In the interests of the 41 per cent, which has been talked about in the house, in the interests of the province of Quebec, which was especially interested, we on this side tried to get for the minority their rights in the only way we possibly could under the constitution. We were prevented from doing it by the liberal party, and during these successive elections the liberal party have endorsed the policy. We want no hands laid on any province even though it deprives the minority of that province of the rights guaranteed under the constitution. And I make bold to say that as long as grass grows and water runs I do not feel disposed to go against that bill, three times expressed by the people. Following up his argument, Foster asked what ground, constitutional or otherwise, could the Dominion stop the people of the Northwest from working out their own school system. All this discussion was out of place. "The plea might be good but it was before the wrong company." This was a matter that concerned the provinces, not the Dominion. ITS SKILFUL WORDING. In the course of his address the speaker said: The reason the minister of the interior could not accept clause 16 of the autonomy bill was because there was something concealed behind his skilful wording. It was not concealed from Sifton himself, but it was there, and consisted of an irrevocable consti-

tutional earmark upon the funds of this country for separate schools forever in these territories. (Loud applause.) It made one of the largest and grandest endowments for sectarian purposes in the history of the world, out of the \$50,000,000 worth of lands in the northwest. (Applause.) The postmaster general was a member of the sub-committee which framed the bill. Either he had not known what was in the clause or else he was unworthy of his position. If it had not been for the superior nerve of the minister of the interior this country would have been no wiser to this day. The clause would have gone through and the postmaster general would have had to father his share of the responsibility. When the ex-minister of the interior a few days ago had laid the blame upon the draftsman of the bill, he (Mr. Foster) thought a could see Mr. Sifton, not with a tear in his eye, but with something like the gleam watching the effect of the type on the lash upon the back of the minister of justice. But he (Mr. Foster) did not think that Mr. Fitzpatrick would shelter himself behind the back of a draftsman. He would take the responsibility for that clause and it would be up to him to explain why so reprehensibly concealed in the legal phrase he had got ahead of the minister of customs, the postmaster general and perhaps even the prime minister himself, and had concealed the potency and power of a most remarkable instrument. This was the view of Mr. Sifton, and there was no doubt that he was right because he had absolutely forced the government to come to his terms and three weeks had brought him back into the house triumphant. To-morrow perhaps they might see him seated again in his old position. What had been the inducement that brought back the minister of the interior? He had come back not as an adherent, but merely as a voting supporter of the measure. There are not few who are strong inducements because it had overcome his principles, his record and his reputation. OTHER RESIGNATIONS. There had been other resignations of recent years. The minister of railways had retired and Sir Wilfrid fearful of his criticisms had met him with a pistol in one hand and a saporific in the other. History did not record whether the trigger of the pistol had been withdrawn, but it had recorded that the saporific had been applied and had been effective. To-day Sir Wilfrid was reported to be facing Mr. Sifton under similar conditions. They did not know what the saporific was, but there were rumors that it would be powerful and effective. Another minister had recently retired and they would have to wait for time to reveal a saporific which would be effective in the case. They would hope that at least one out of three would have the menliness both to go out and to stay out on principle. The Northwest members at first had been groping about blindly without their leader. They had fallen into the pit and groaned there until their leader came back and gently led them up to higher and safer ground. (Conservative applause.) These men would have to bear the onus either of ignorance, indifference or complicity in the attempt to fasten upon the Northwest the conditions concealed in clause 16. Yankees are Mad at Themselves. Boston advices of March 31st contain the following:—The first act of retaliation directed against the Gloucester fishermen by the Newfoundland authorities is reported by the Hay-Bond treaty is reported by Capt. John McInnis of the Albatross. Capt. McInnis telegraphing the owners of the vessel (Conningham and Thompson, from Port au Basque, stated that when he put in there for a supply of codfish bait he was refused permission to purchase a license. Some of the comments on the Newfoundland-Gloucester fuss are as follows:—Boston Herald—"As a very large proportion of the men in the Gloucester fleet are Nova Scotians, and as it is these same fishermen that need their influence to practically nullify the Hay-Bond treaty, it would appear that Nova Scotia immigrants are more American than Americans." Springfield Republican—"Politically speaking, this is the real relation of the whole of British North American are exacerbated by such incidents and we find the cause of a more sympathetic and friendly feeling between Canada and the United States thrown back, possibly for years. It is not improbable that the outcome of the rebuff that Newfoundland has received from the United States, in the rather complete rejection of the reciprocity treaty, will be that country's political amalgamation with the Dominion. America's inaptitude in dealing with the British colonies on the north has been conspicuous since the days of the revolutionary war, and the end evidently has not been reached." Boston Post—"The fact that the Newfoundland government has endeavored to decree the privilege of buying bait in Newfoundland waters is snuffed at by Gloucester vessel owners and not much attention is given to it by the American public. But one of these days Newfoundland, rejected by the United States congress in connection with its rather complete rejection of the reciprocity treaty, will be that country's political amalgamation with the Dominion. America's inaptitude in dealing with the British colonies on the north has been conspicuous since the days of the revolutionary war, and the end evidently has not been reached." 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