

notifying members that the only change was the word 'territories,' and does not make any reference to this other change. It seems as though the government, in dropping this word, had one of two objects in view, either to accomplish something in the way of affecting the status of schools in the west, or to put their opponents in the position of calling attention to the subject, and then being able to charge them with raising a religious furore as the hon. Secretary of State has intimated. If any such trouble as that shall arise, which I do not think is at all likely, the government would be held responsible for it, in making this change in a manner calculated to excite suspicion. Looking at the change in itself, I do not think that it is at all important. If my hon. friend and his colleagues have an object in view to cause some of their opponents by a ruse to object and put themselves in a position of raising a religious furore, they may succeed, but I hope they will not. I do not think that the change makes any material difference from what I can learn of the schools in the west, and furthermore, if there would be any difference made, it would be carrying out the policy of the Conservative party with reference to the autonomy of the provinces in the matter of education. That position was, that the legislatures of the different provinces should have absolute control of their own schools. This is simply applying that principle, and, as I do not think that the dropping of the word will make any material change, and that it will be simply in the direction, if it was not clear before, of giving the provinces control over their schools, I do not feel inclined to change the clause as it stands. I may be wrong about that, but these are my honest opinions on the subject. When the Autonomy Bill was before parliament, the Conservative party look a strong and determined attitude on this question, that the matter of schools should be left altogether to the provinces themselves. Now, I cannot see that anything in this section will have any different effect, and I congratulate my hon. friend, the leader of the government in this House, on coming over to the policy of the Conservative party on that subject.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I should like to ask the Secretary of State if he knows of any difficulties that have arisen in the past in reference to the distribution of the school funds in any of the western provinces, outside of Manitoba as to the character of the schools which exist in that country.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—No, I have heard nothing. I thought everything was running pleasantly and smoothly. I do not think a single member of the government—perhaps the Minister of the Interior might—knew that and change was made by dropping the word 'public.' I never heard of it until it was brought to my notice here.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—If any difficulty had arisen, that might account for the leaving out of the word 'public.'

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—None has arisen, everything has been running pleasantly and smoothly.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—In reference to the resolution referred to by the hon. senator from Portage La Prairie, that is simply what has been demanded by Manitoba and the western provinces for many years. They desire to have the school funds from the sale of school lands placed at their disposal, independent altogether of the Dominion. The hon. gentleman knows that when these lands were set apart for school purposes, the Dominion government retained power to control the sale of such lands, and also the investment of the funds derived from the sale of the lands, and that then they were distributed among the provinces. The question arose as to whether the fund would be safer in the hands of the Dominion for the sake of the trust for which it was created, than to allow each of the provinces to deal with and expend it. I know when the demand was made upon the late government, Sir John Macdonald, then premier of the country, declined to hand over the school fund to the provinces, on the ground that he believed it would be much safer and more sacredly kept and managed by the Dominion than by allowing it to be handed over to the provinces. My own view is that it would be better to allow the different provinces to handle and manage all the public