

was defending the Government under a subject with which he is familiar, and he is forced to admit that the good, old wealthy County of Huron for the first time in its history is without a sufficient supply of qualified teachers. To quote, Sir, his exact words as I took them down, "This is the first year we have had teachers in our County teaching under permits." Sir, the honorable gentleman is a new member in this House. Had he been in this House three years ago he would have heard me sound the note of warning to the present Government, and especially to the present unheeding Minister of Education. Over and over again, Sir, not only three years ago, but two years ago, I pointed out clearly that apart altogether from the question of the wisdom or unwisdom of doing away with the Model Schools, that if they were wiped out by one sweep, as was the intention of the Government, the unavoidable result must be a dearth of teachers. (Applause). I have to thank the honorable member for North Huron, for he understands his subject, because he backed up an argument I advanced three years ago. The honorable gentleman says our teachers are going west. This is true. Sir, honorable gentlemen in this House will remember three years ago when I argued against the abolition of Model Schools, and particularly against the revolution and wiping them out in one sweep, I pointed out that the only schools through which we would get qualified teachers would be the Normal Schools, and that a graduate of any Normal School in this Province might go west and without any further qualification whatever would be allowed to teach in the Western Provinces. I said then emphatically that my then opinion was that at least twenty per cent. of our Normal-trained teachers were then trekking westward. Sir, I repeat that I then predicted what would actually happen, namely, that if the Government persisted in immediately wiping out and abolishing Model Schools inside of four years we would have a dearth of teachers. (Applause). My prediction has come true. Honorable gentlemen will recall the note of warning sounded over and over again. Nay, Sir, we pointed out the reasons. The result was obvious; but, Sir, with a determination of purpose that was remarkable, the Government lent us a deaf ear. They wouldn't listen to us; they wouldn't be persuaded, and we have the deplorable result that to-day one-tenth of the schools in the Province of Ontario are in the hands of incompetent and unqualified teachers. I make this statement, Sir, and I desire it to be quoted through the length and the breadth of the Province. I have no returns of the exact number of schools without qualified teachers, but the information I get is, Sir, that as a result of the immediate change, against which we strongly protested, and as a result of the revolution that has been worked—because if the Government had desired to do away with the Model Schools, or to make a transition from the double system of Model and Normal Schools to that of Normal Schools alone it need not have been done like the breaking off of a pipe-stem, it might have been done gradually—I believe that ten per cent. to-day of the Public Schools of Ontario in the rural districts are in the hands of teachers who have no sufficient qualifications. (Applause). Now, Mr. Speaker, that is an unfortunate condition, an unfortunate state of affairs. It is most unfortunate that any Government would deliberately and stubbornly bring about the condition that we find our Public Schools in to-day. We make no argument, Sir, against the teachers of the Province of Ontario, as the honorable member would seem to indicate. We join hands with him in his plea on behalf of fair treatment for the teachers of our land. That is a natural plea, Sir, to come either from himself or from me, both having been engaged in educational work. But, Sir, after the Government had been warned, after the possibilities had been pointed out, they are to be condemned for adopting and deliberately taking the course they did. They, Sir, deliberately sinned against the light, if it is possible at all to get light in on them. (Applause). Take my own riding as an illustration. When the first of January last came there were either thirteen or seventeen schools vacant. The Trustees looked for teachers, and were glad to take anybody to open the schools, drawing, Sir, from students of our Collegiate Institute without any professional training whatever, and glad to get them if they would go out and take charge of these schools. In many portions of the Province there are many schools the doors of which are closed because of the impossibility to secure qualified teachers. The honorable member is in a state of affairs that this Government and the Opposition are in about after they were fairly warned time and again across the floor of this House in ample time to have avoided the mistake. I here, Sir, challenge them to deny that, three sessions ago, and two sessions ago, I distinctly pointed out the unfortunate state of affairs that must necessarily be the result of their senseless procedure. So much, Sir, for the scarcity of teachers.